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THE NEW YORKER

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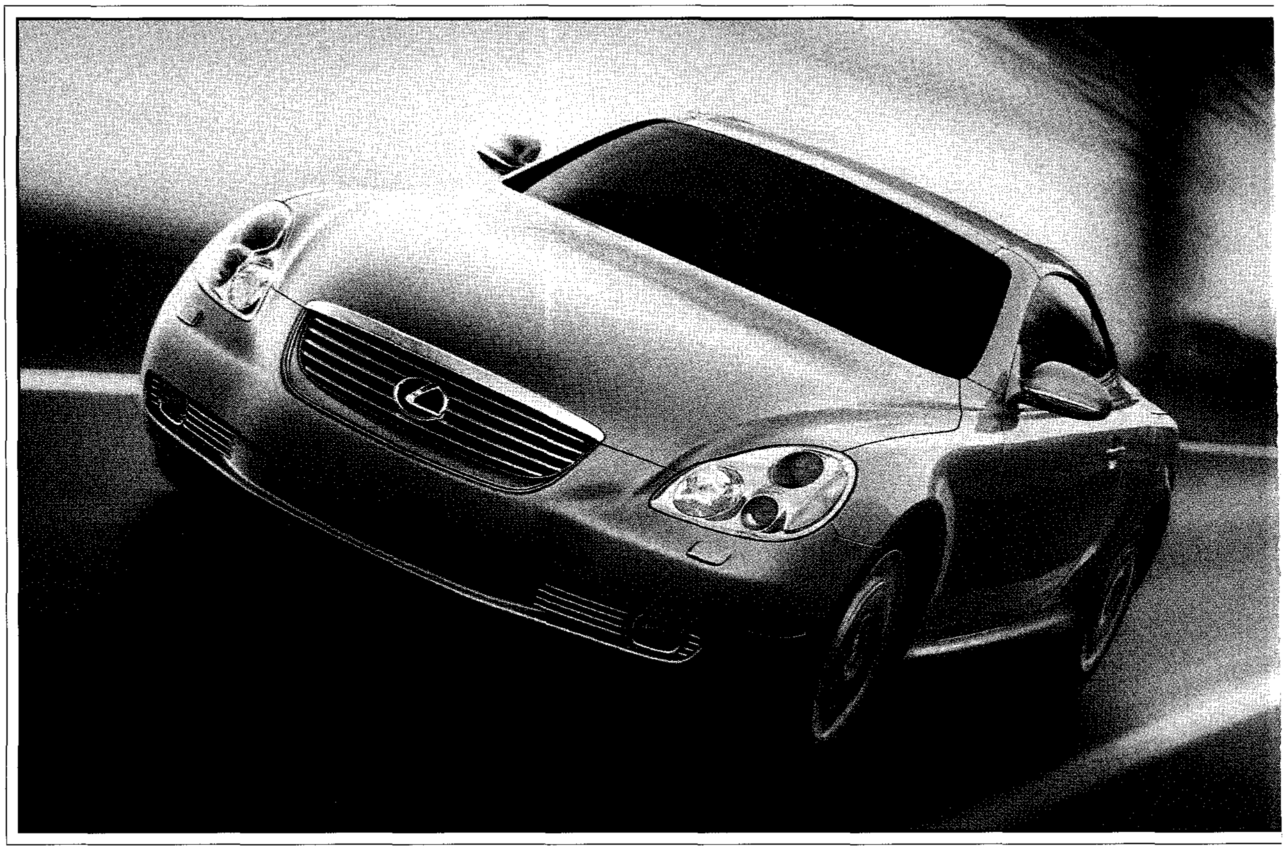

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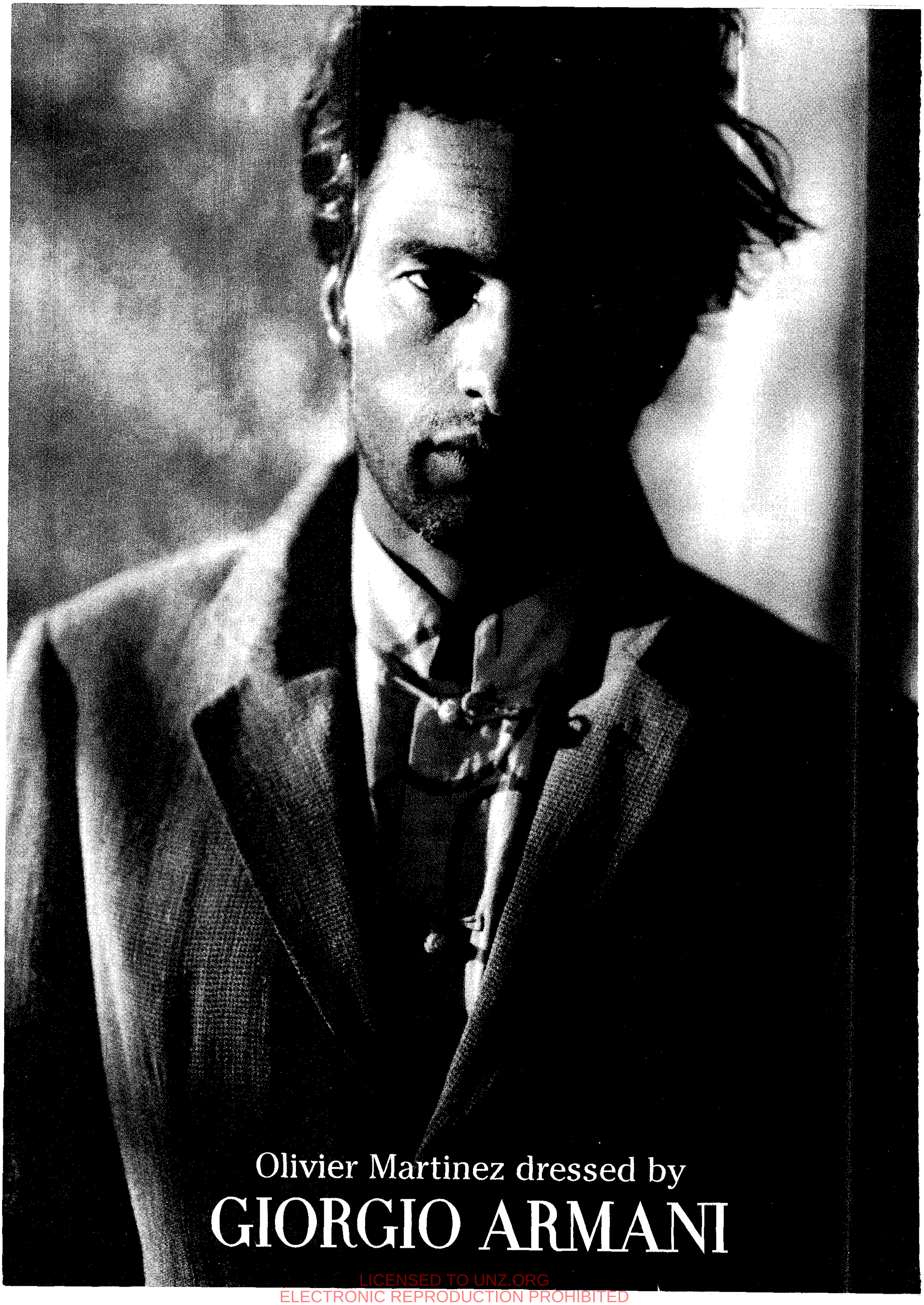
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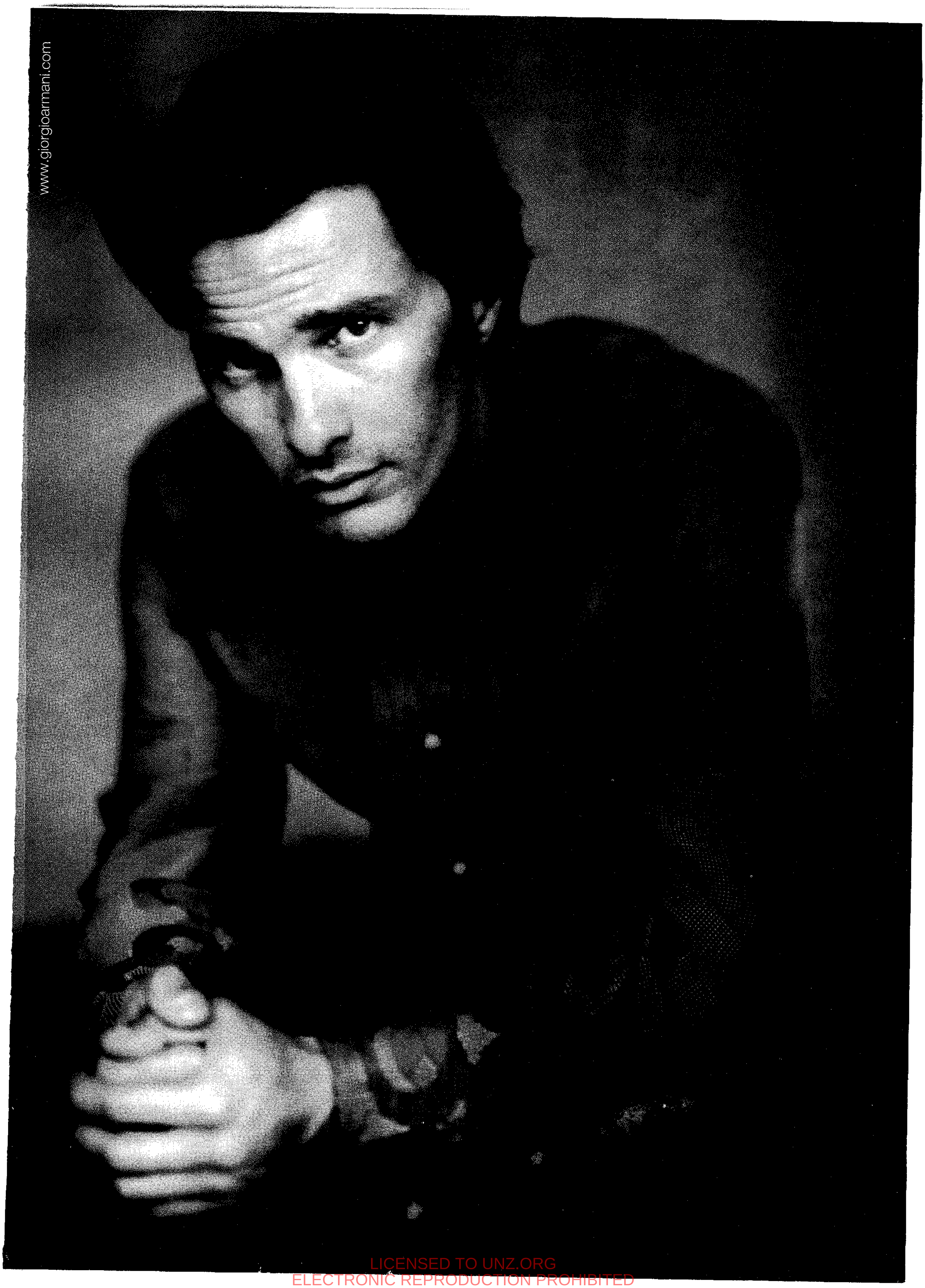
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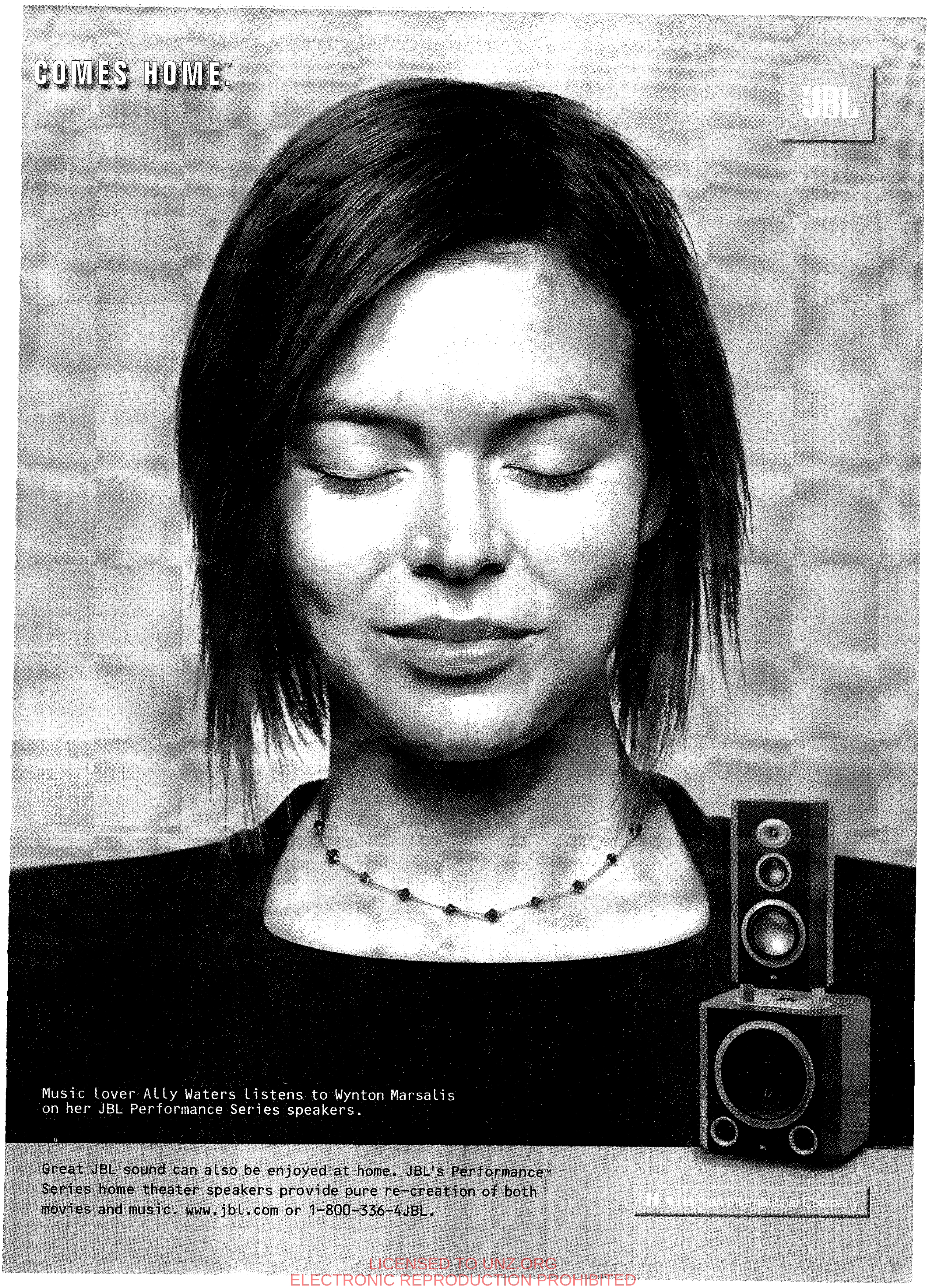
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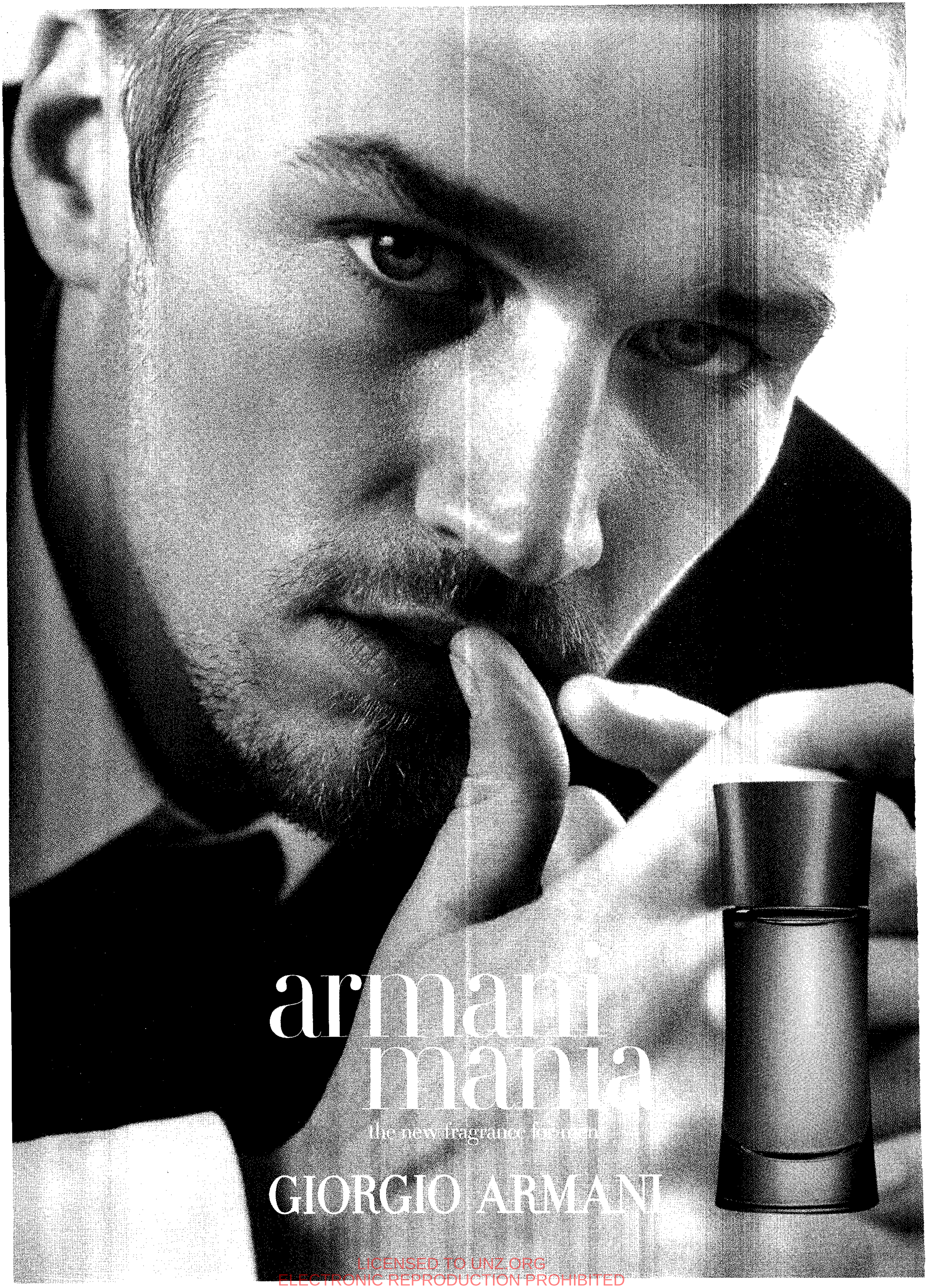
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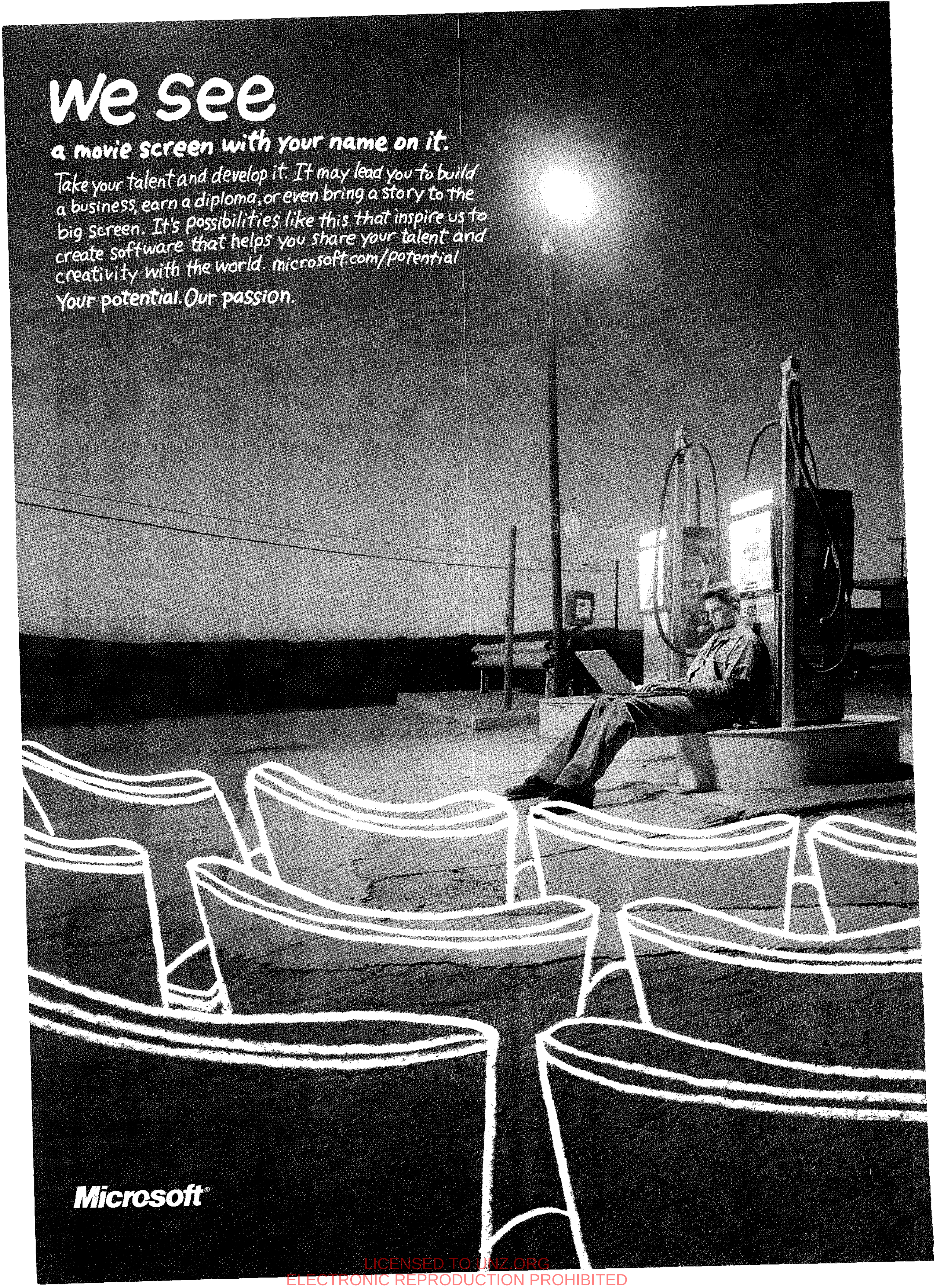

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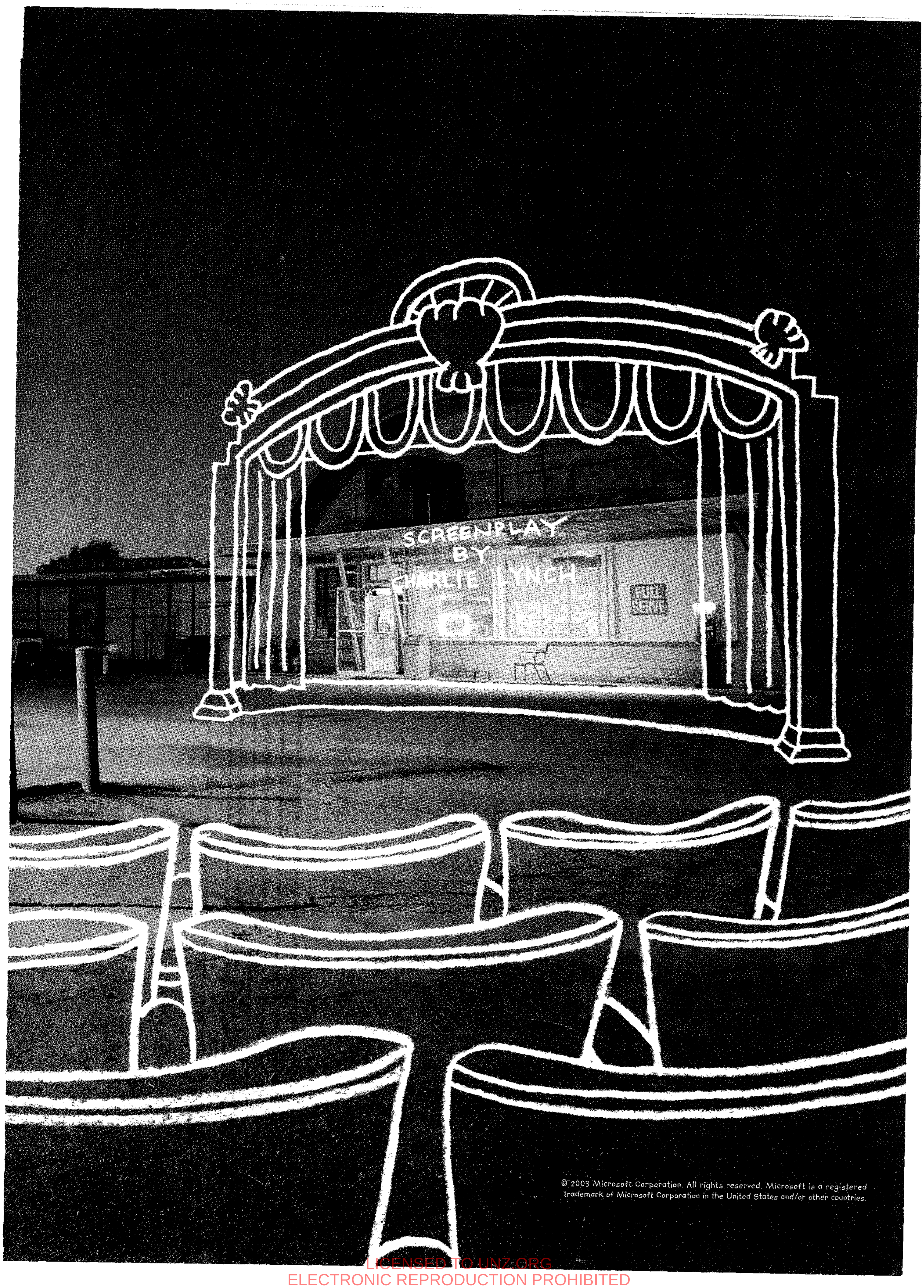
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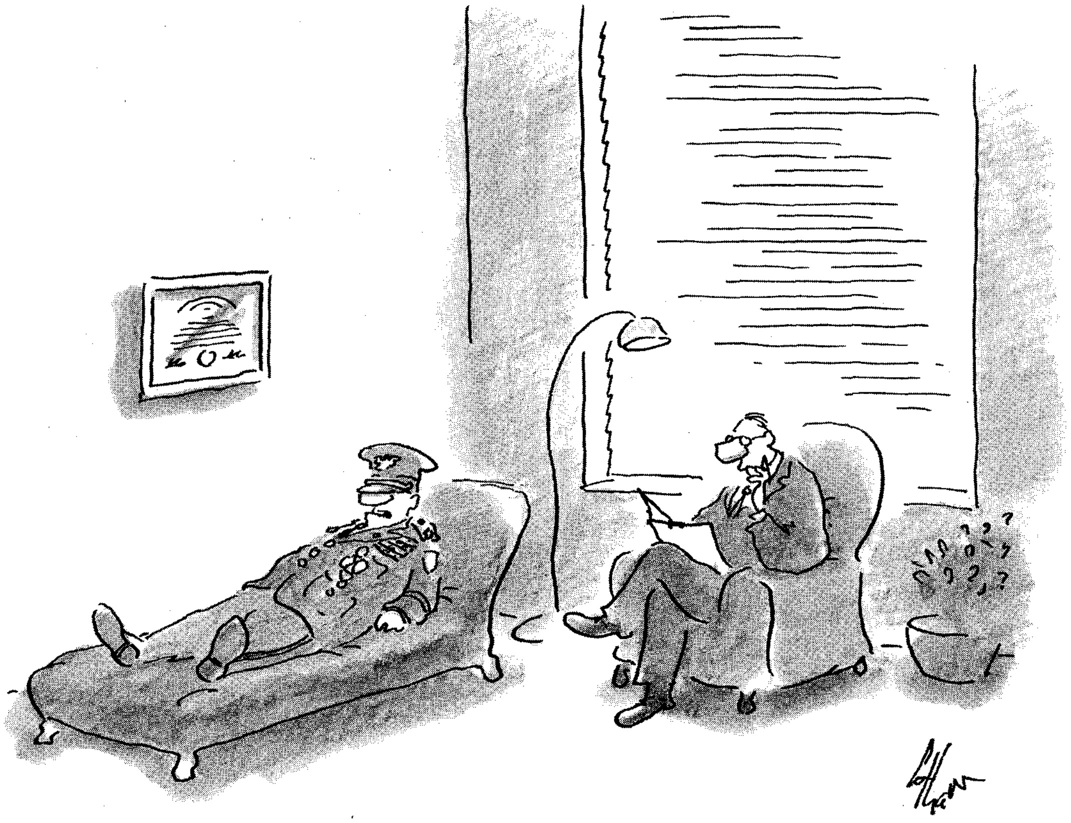

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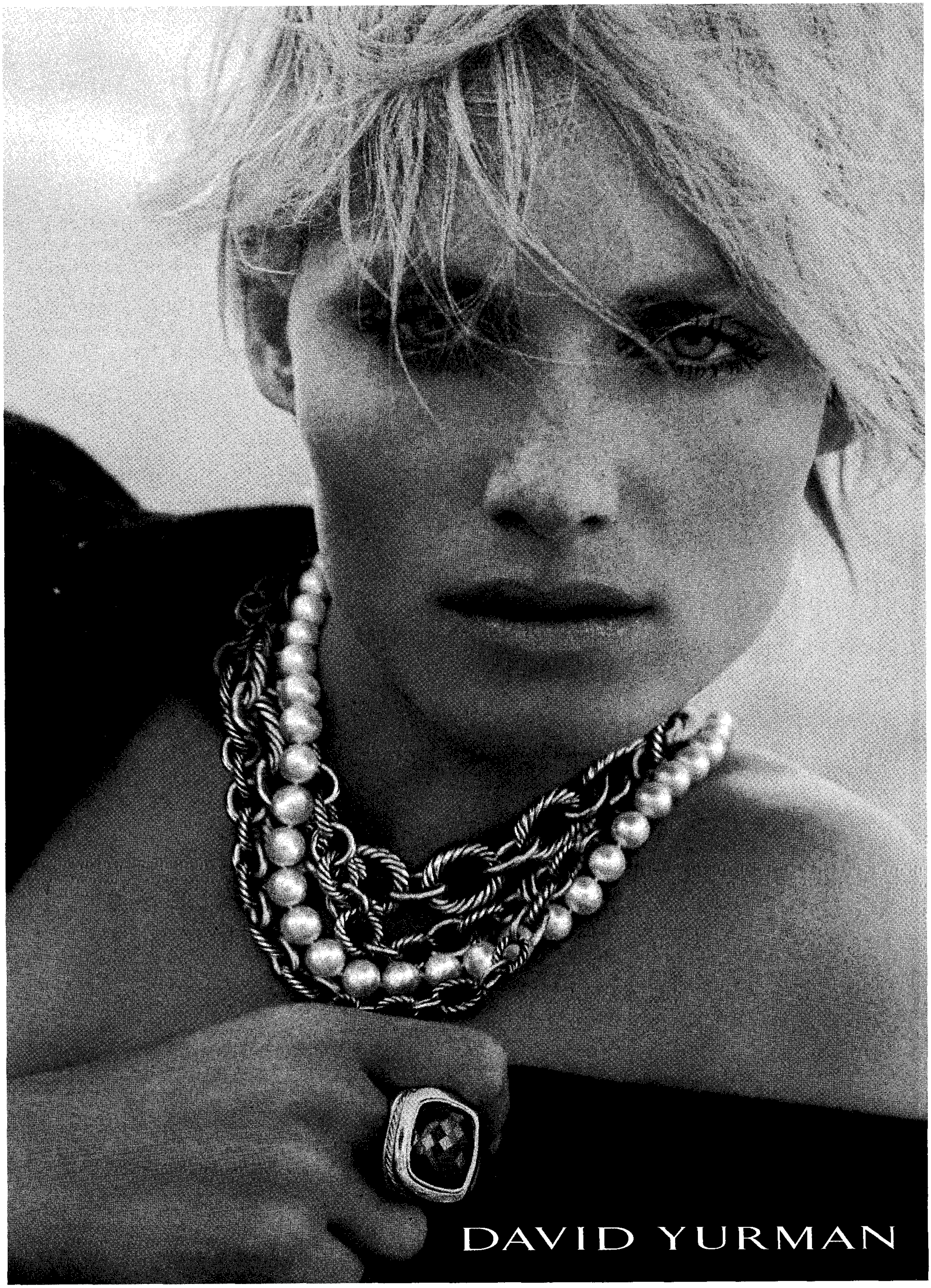
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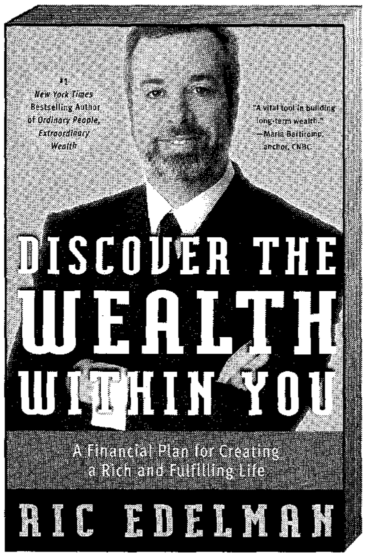
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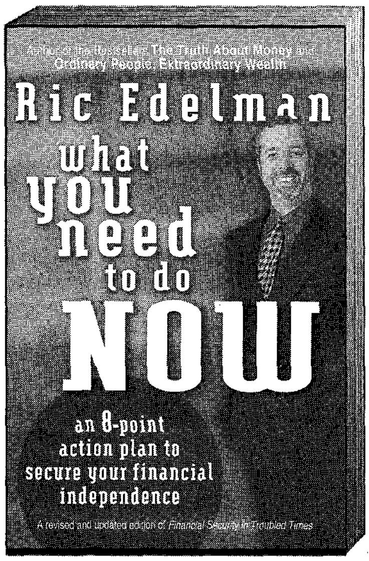
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CONTRIBUTORS

Jon Lee Anderson ("The Collapse," p. 70) is reporting on the war from Baghdad.

Rebecca Mead ("You're Getting Married," p. 76) has been a staff writer since 1997.

Paul Muldoon (Poem, p. 78) is this year's recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

Donald Antrim ("Ad Nauseam," p. 92) has published three novels, including "The Verificationist."

Akhil Sharma ("Chased Away," p. 134) is the author of the novel "An Obedient Father."

John Bowe ("Nobodies," p. 106) is the co-author of "Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs."

Julian Barnes ("Union Blues," p. 145) has published "In the Land of Pain," a translation from Alphonse Daudet.

Connie Bruck ("The Monopolist," p. 136) is the author of "When Hollywood Had a King," which comes out in June.

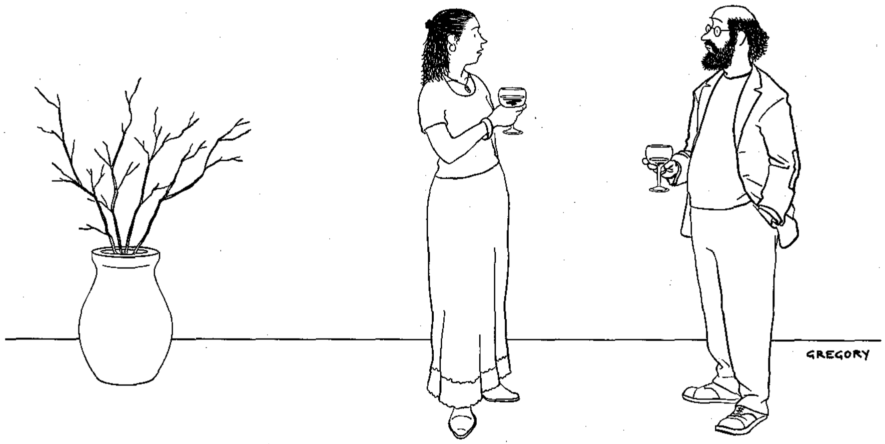
Antonya Nelson ("All Washed Up," p. 152) lives in Houston. Her most recent book of short stories is "Female Trouble."

Tad Friend ("Manhunter," p. 156) writes Letter from California for the magazine. His latest book is "Lost in Mongolia."

Peter Trachtenberg ("Cloudburst," p. 165) is the author of "7 Tattoos: A Memoir in the Flesh."

Saul Steinberg (Sketchbook, p. 162), who died in 1999, contributed regularly to *The New Yorker* for nearly sixty years. His first drawing appeared in October, 1941.

Sherman Alexie (Fiction, p. 168) is the author of "Ten Little Indians," a collection of short stories. ♦



"Funny, you don't look hawkish."

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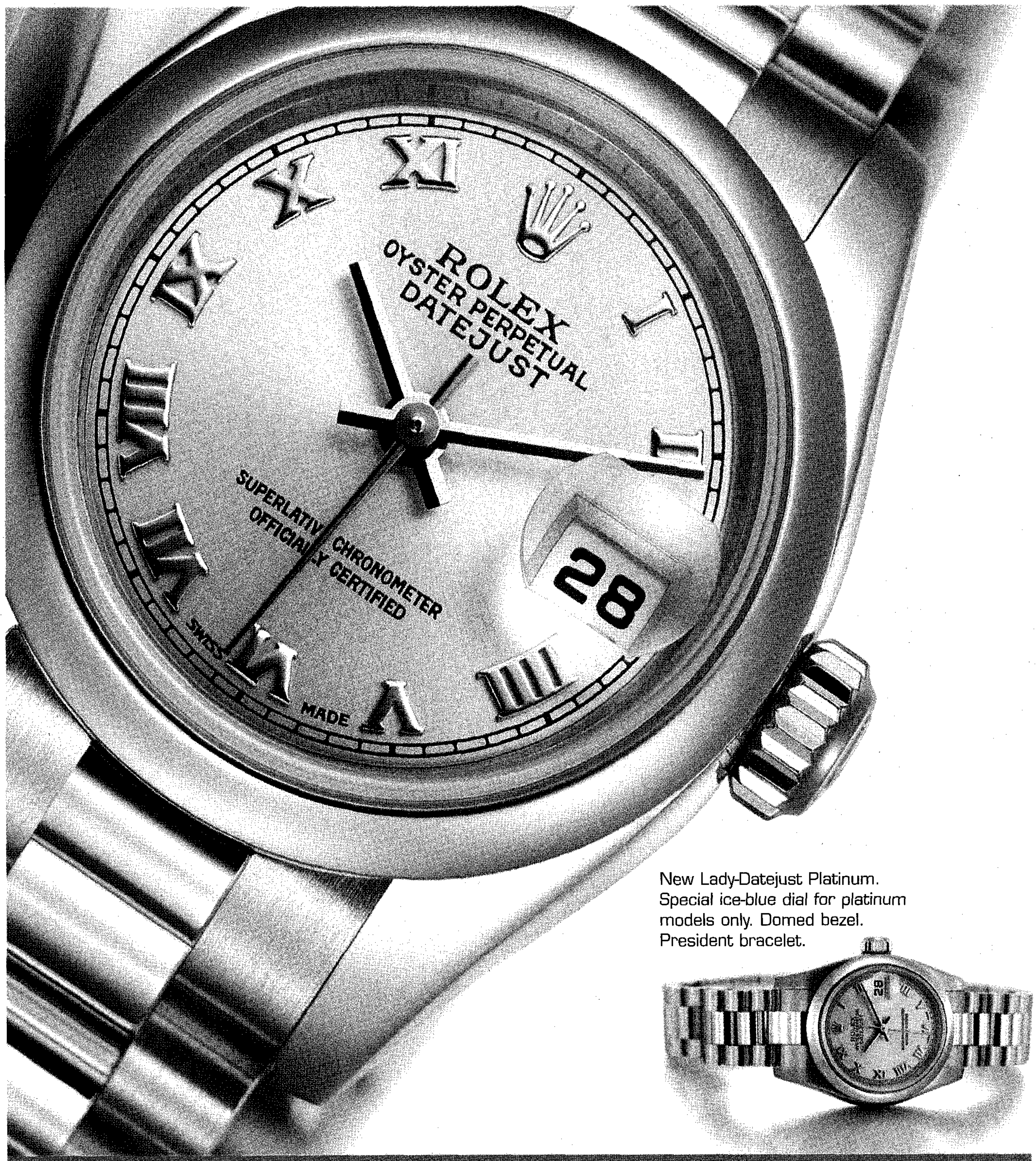
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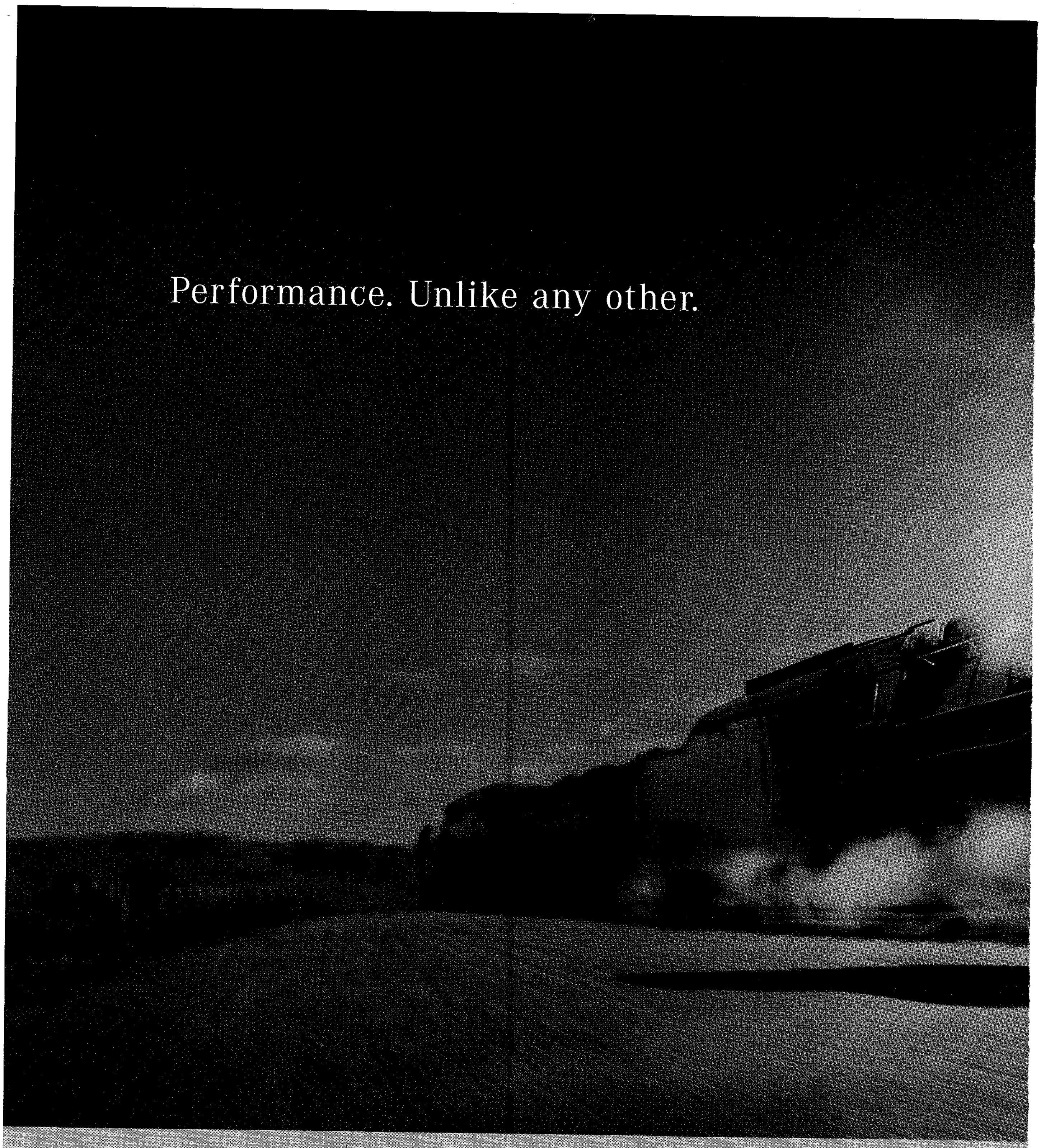
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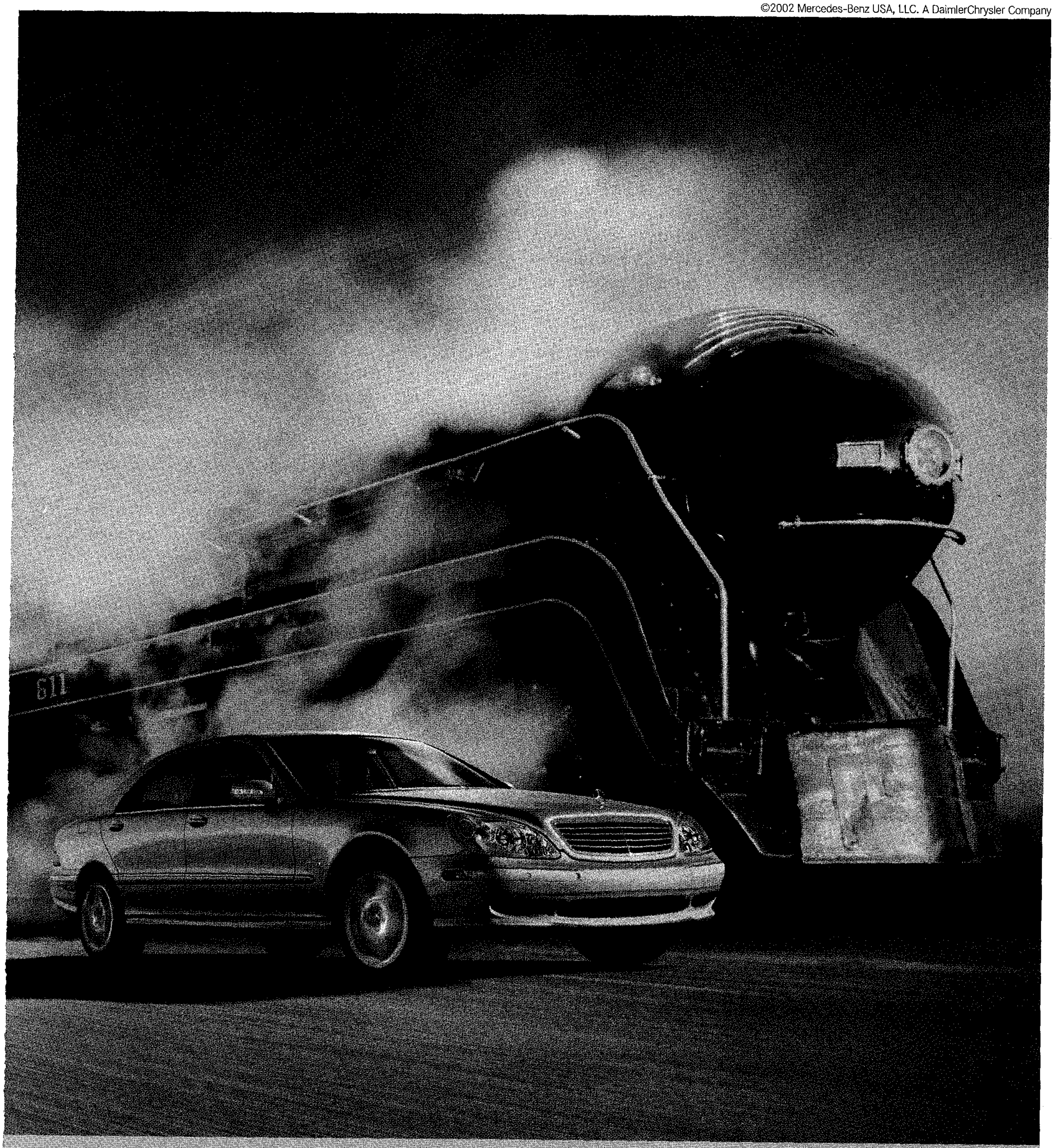

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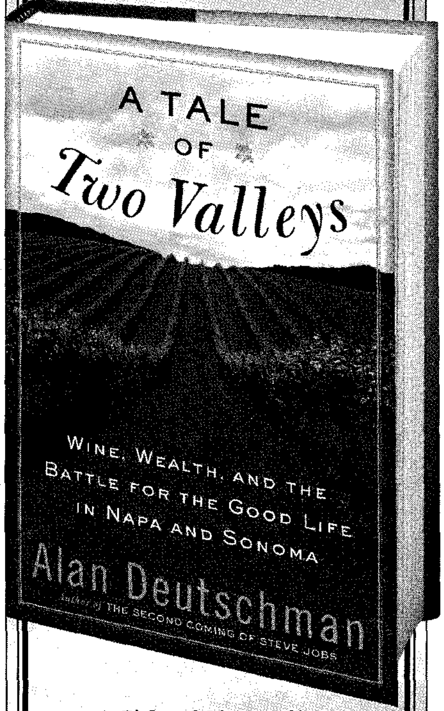
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THE DISSIDENT

Larissa MacFarquhar writes that Noam Chomsky "often seems baffled, even repelled, by the thought of actual people and their psychologies," leading him to conclude that expectations are more relevant than motives ("The Devil's Accountant," March 31st). But the world is characterized by the increasing complexity of moral choices, and complex problems demand nuanced solutions, not extreme, contrarian reactions. Clinton's bombing of a Khartoum factory is morally equivalent to September 11th? This is the voice of the revered elder statesman of the left? A sense of Chomsky's own motivations—his desire to simplify, obfuscate, or outright ignore difficult cases such as the conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Rwanda—can and should shape our expectations of him and his political utterances. And he must forgive us if, lately, we expect very little of him.
Nicholas A. Fryer
Chicago, Ill.

MacFarquhar says of Chomsky, "In the sixties, he was one of many protesting the war; now, when he opposes bombing Afghanistan, he is almost alone." In fact, Chomsky was part of a quite small, marginal group of antiwar activists during the very early years of the Vietnam War. We've come to think of the entire decade of the sixties as a time of protest, but Chomsky spoke up before there was any kind of mass movement, and he endured a significant backlash for taking an unpopular, "radical" stand. MacFarquhar is right to point out Chomsky's specious analogies, his bullying, and his way of insisting that he is a neutral vender of pure fact. Repetitive, monotonous, accusatory, sarcastic, vicious—fair enough. But isn't the real question whether what he's saying is true, or useful, or important? If not, why do his ideas have such an influence on people? At a time when there is so much to say about the foreign policy of the United States, the use of force, the efficacy of protest, and the objectivity of the media, it's unfortunate that a Profile of a prominent dissident like Chomsky would leave his ideas about these topics relatively unexplored.
Allen MacDuffie
Somerville, Mass.

In her multidimensional Profile of Chomsky, MacFarquhar illustrates that what goes around comes around. Chomsky, in proposing a universal grammar, was reacting to the cultural determinism of many anthropologists. They had sought cultural explanations for differences in behavior that were then popularly viewed as being racial traits. Working with exotic languages and cultures, anthropologists argued that grammatical forms influenced the way people saw the world—overstating their case by disregarding many elements that are common to all grammars. When Chomsky, whose thesis rested mostly on English, got around to learning about linguistic diversity, he had to confront the influence that language has on the way people see things. In addition, neuroscientists now recognize that the brain is constantly being reshaped by experiences, including social ones. Thus the language infants hear affects those brain structures as they grow. Chomsky may speak in the old-fashioned biological idiom of switches in the language organ being turned on or off, but what he has done, like it or not, is rediscover cultural determinism.
Walter Goldschmidt
Professor of Anthropology Emeritus
University of California
Los Angeles, Calif.

CORRECTION: In "The Devil's Accountant," a quote from Nathan Glazer about Zellig Harris, Noam Chomsky's teacher, should have read "we all felt his range was enormous," not "we all felt his rage was enormous."

•

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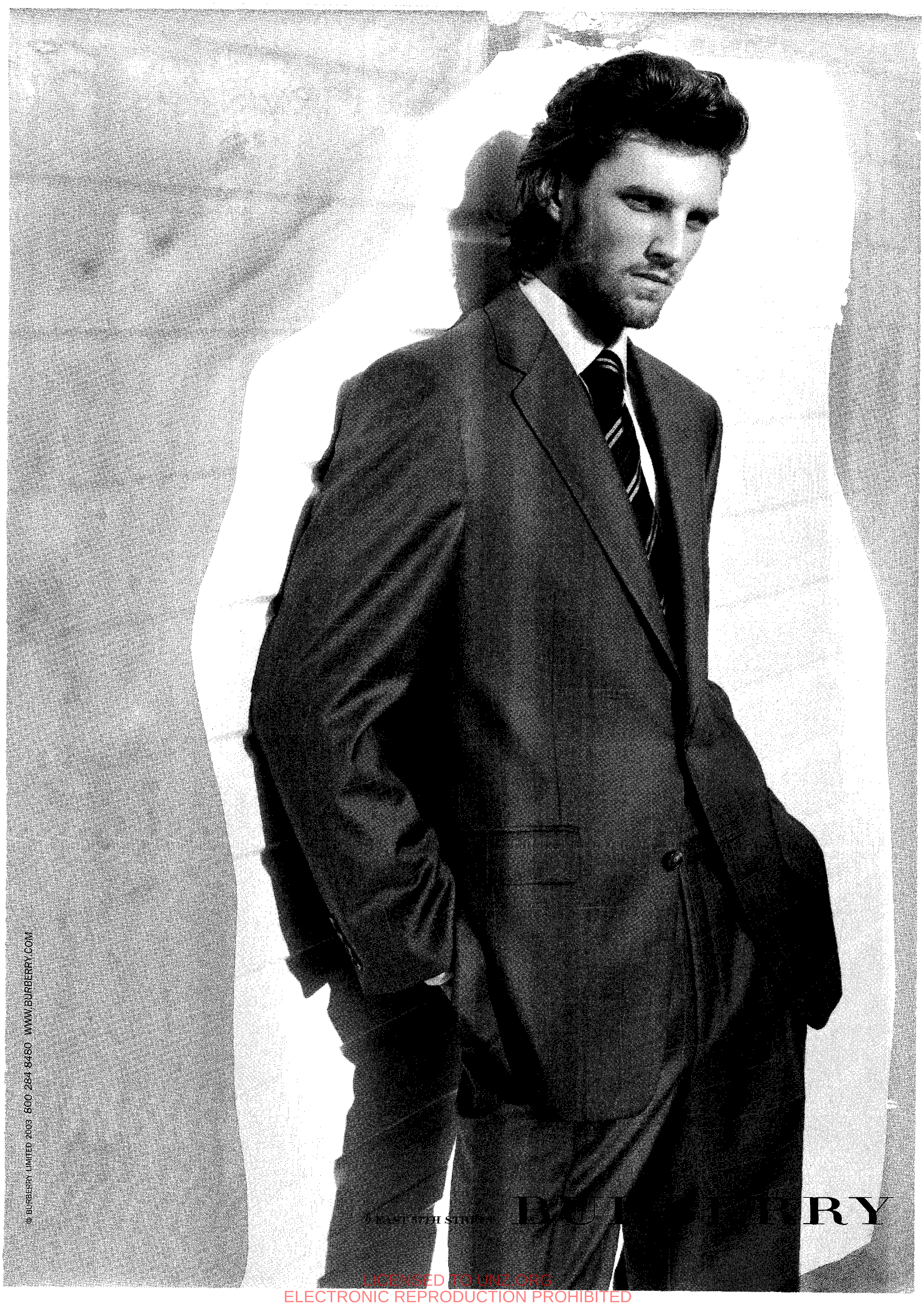
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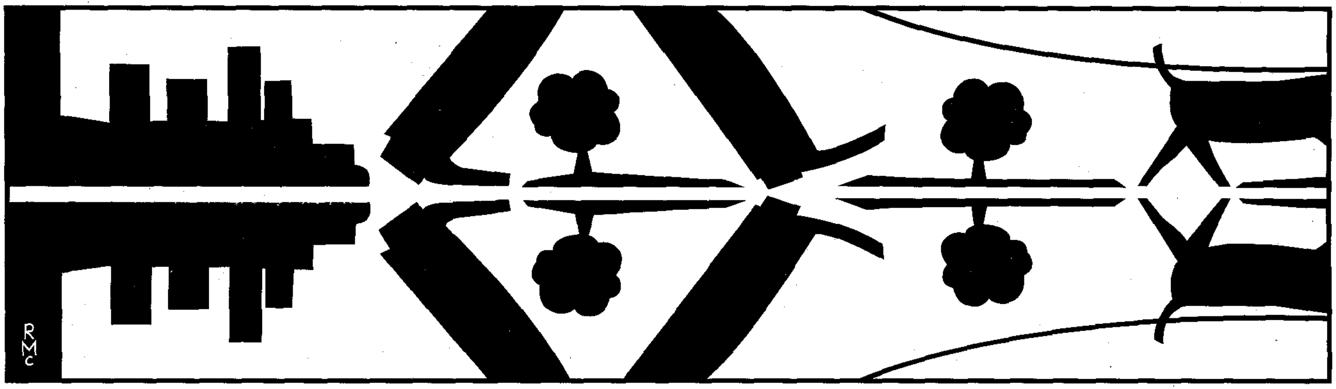

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CARA LUCIA
Mabou Mines presents a drama about the life and death of James Joyce's daughter, Lucia, which revisits her bohemian early days in Paris, her fifty-odd years in a mental hospital, and her shadow presence as a character in the pages of "Finnegans Wake." With Ruth Maleczech as Old Lucia and Clove Galilee as Young Lucia. Directed by Sharon Fogarty. Previews begin April 16. Opens April 23 at 8:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-647-0202.)

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM
A few decades ago in Washington Square Park, all the leaves were brown and the sky was gray, and the Mamas and the Papas were stuck in Greenwich Village, dreaming of California. The original Papa Denny Doherty is still around to sing about it—which he does in a new bio-musical by Randal Myler ("Love, Janis," "Hank Williams: Lost Highway") about the life and times of the group. Doherty performs with an ensemble cast and a six-piece band that plays and sings backup. In previews. Opens April 23 at 7. (Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

ENCHANTED APRIL
In a play by Matthew Barber, adapted from the novel by Elizabeth von Arnim, four women run off to a villa in Italy to escape their dreary lives in London and recover their joie de vivre. Molly Ringwald, Elizabeth Ashley, Jayne Atkinson, and Dagmara Dominczyk play the leads. Michael Wilson directs. In previews. Opens April 29 at 8. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

GYPSY
Bernadette Peters plays the iconic stage mother Mama Rose, in the musical by Jule Styne, Stephen Sondheim, and Arthur Laurents. With original choreography by Jerome Robbins and additional choreography by Jerry Mitchell. Directed by Sam Mendes. In previews. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LOOK OF LOVE
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a musical revue of the songs of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Directed by Scott Ellis and choreographed by Ann Reinking. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

MARY TODD . . . A WOMAN APART
The Centenary Stage Company presents Carl Wallnau's drama about the wife of Abraham Lincoln, with Colleen Smith Wallnau in the title role. Previews begin April 24. Opens April 29 at 8. (Samuel Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

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27	28	29				

WRITER'S BLOCK
Woody Allen directs a double bill of his two new one-act comedies, "Riverside Drive" and "Old Saybrook," with an ensemble cast that includes Bebe Neuwirth, Paul Reiser, and Jay Thomas. Previews begin April 23. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AS YOU LIKE IT
Erica Schmidt brings her popular 2000 Fringe Festival production of Shakespeare's play, first performed in a downtown parking lot, to the Public. Six actors play fourteen parts, with Bryce Dallas Howard as Rosalind. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200. Closes April 27.)

AVENUE Q
This uproarious new musical tells the story of a group of neighbors struggling to make it in New York City. Unlike another musical with a similar theme—"Rent"—the show doesn't deal with life-and-death issues, and many of the neighbors are cloth puppets (the nimble puppeteers are veterans of "Sesame Street"). This could sound like a recipe for juvenilia, but the end product is wicked fun—and definitely for grownups. Subversive, cheerful songs by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx address drunkenness, promiscuity, and racism with winking matter-of-factness, and the director, Jason Moore, guides the absurdity with zest. With a band led by Gary Adler, puppets designed by Rick Lyon, and a book by Jeff Whitty. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. Closes May 4.)

THE CRAZY LOCOMOTIVE
The Polish dramatist Stanislaw Witkiewicz (1885-1939) wrote this one-act in 1923, but it wasn't performed during his lifetime, and you can see why: it's better read than seen. Dadaist at its core, the story, such as it is, concerns a group of passengers on a train that has been hijacked by two villains, Tenser and Slobok, played with élan by Leopold Lowe and the Classical Theatre of Harlem's co-founder and artistic director, Alfred Preisser. They're both in love with a vamp, Julia Tomasik (Erica Ball), whose wily ways keep her motor running. But the real action is philosophical: Witkiewicz wants to make a point about man's sense of alienation in the technological age. The production, directed by the gifted Christopher McElroen, doesn't work for a number of reasons, the most salient of which is the actors' diction: in the rush of words, one can't quite make out what they're saying. With excellent set and costume design by Anne Lommel, sound by Stefan Jacobs, and lighting by Colin D. Young. (H.S.A. Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444. Closes April 20.)

DAISY MAYME
The Pearl presents a revival of George Kelly's 1926 comedy about an irrepressible spinster (Robin Leslie Brown) who shakes up the lives of an aging bachelor and the grasping relatives who hope to take possession of his estate. Russell Treyz directs. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

A DAY IN THE DEATH OF JOE EGG
The British playwright Peter Nichols says that he likes to keep audiences in a state of "comic alarm." In the Roundabout's revival of his 1967 semiautobiographical play, Nichols's unreliable narrator, Bri—a droll, bored schoolteacher, brought to magnificent life by the comedian Eddie Izzard, inspires that alarm, first in the audience, which he treats as his rowdy classroom, then in his sweet-natured wife, Sheila (the expert Victoria Hamilton), whom he chases around the sofa in vain pursuit of a little rumpy-pumpy. Bri's jollity has a manic, almost slapstick edge, but when the doorbell rings and the couple's brain-damaged ten-year-old daughter enters or, rather, is wheeled in, the smile is wiped off the audience's face. The caprice of the characters gives way to the caprice of the gods, and we find ourselves in the no man's land of human catastrophe. Directed by Laurence Boswell. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/14/03.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

GOLDA'S BALCONY
In William Gibson's one-woman show about Golda Meir—the Russian immigrant from Wisconsin who helped create the state of Israel and eventually became its prime minister—Tovah Feldshuh demonstrates how national and family passions blend in the heart, making dispassionate judgment impossible. Scott Schwartz directs. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. Closes May 11.)

THE JACKIE WILSON STORY
The Black Ensemble Theatre Company's musical about the famed R. & B. singer stars Chester Gregory II as Wilson and Melba Moore as his mother. Written and directed by Jackie Taylor. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 212-307-7171. Closes April 27.)

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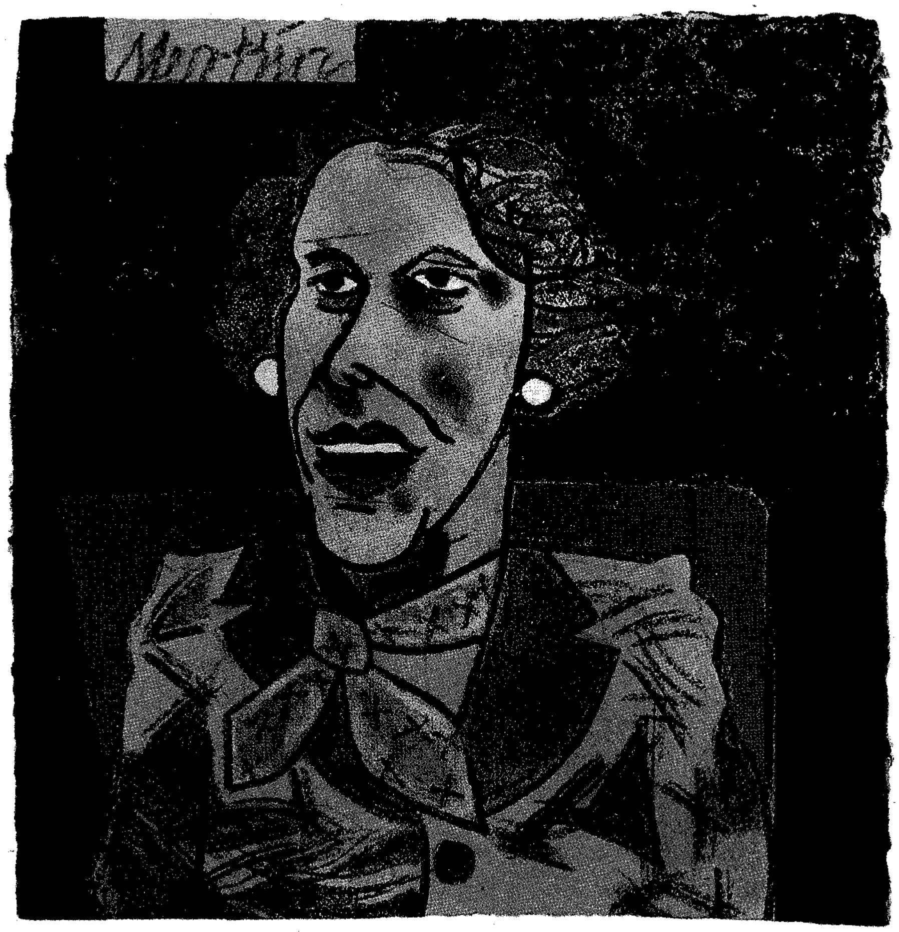
THE LAST SUNDAY IN JUNE

In Jonathan Tolins's light comedic melodrama, Michael and Tom (Johnathan F. McClain and Peter Smith), a gay couple who live on Christopher Street, have decided to move out of the city and hazard suburban bliss in Nyack. The play is a kind of postmodern "Boys in the Band"; there are abundant self-referential wisecracks about this being another gay play, and the requisite Barbra Streisand jokes and heartache. But the underlying misogyny leaves a bad taste in the mouth that the gifted ensemble cast can't overcome, and when Tolins takes on a relatively thorny subject—marriage—the show loses its spark. Directed by Trip Cullman. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)



Lynn Redgrave stumbles into a friendship with a foot fetishist, in "Talking Heads."

RICHARD MERKIN

LIFE (X) 3

The monstrous is given an altogether upbeat French bourgeois touch in Yasmina Reza's slick new play, a ninety-minute field day of gleeful malevolence in which three possible scenarios of bad behavior at a failed dinner party play out, to no apparent point. The excellent cast includes Helen Hunt, Brent Spiner, Linda Emond, and John Turturro. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.)

NINE

The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a revival of the Tony Award-winning musical based on Fellini's "8 1/2," starring Antonio Banderas. David Leveaux directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

O JERUSALEM

A. R. Gurney's darkly comic drama about the diplomatic failures that preceded 9/11 indicts the American political psyche through close scrutiny of a weak, well-meaning governmental Everyman, Hartwell Clark (Stephen Rowe), a smug Yalie oilman with a diplomatic post in the Middle East. The cast delivers Gurney's briskly paced lines with humor and bite, and the play is strong when it is personal and satirical. Jim Simpson directs. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-226-2407. Closes April 19.)

OUR LADY OF 121ST STREET

Stephen Adly Guirgis's play speaks gorgeously to our deracinated times. A group of fractured souls congregate at the Ortiz Funeral Home in Harlem to mourn Sister Rose—a nun who had taught most of them as children—but the wake turns into a vigil when Sister Rose is stolen from her casket. Guirgis's brilliantly drawn characters have been punished by life after their school days and exhausted by their grievances. Burnished to a shine by Philip Seymour Hoffman's deft direction, "Our Lady of 121st Street" is a fever chart of the heart's deceptions. (10/14 & 21/02) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-4100.)

THE PLAY WHAT I WROTE

This sketch-comedy soufflé, starring the British comedy team Sean Foley and Hamish McColl, was a huge hit in London—the original was praised in these pages as "a sort of anti-homage to the late, great English double act Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise." But to American audiences unfamiliar with the departed duo, the soufflé sags a bit, although it offers plenty of lighthearted tidbits to savor. Foley is a master of silly walks; McColl plays the straight man, drolly self-serious, who wants to trade pies in the face for a drama set in a dungeon during the Terreur, called "A Tight Squeeze for the Scarlet Pimple." As Arthur, the duo's gofer, Toby Jones is a Tasmanian devil of hilarity; he whirs about the stage trying to round up a big star to act with McColl in "The Scarlet Pimple," and it takes him most of the evening to succeed. The show's gimmick is that Arthur really does lasso a star in the end—so far, Kevin Kline, Liam Neeson, and Roger Moore have joined in the frolic. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SHE STOOPS TO COMEDY

Playwrights Horizons presents a new farce written and directed by David Greenspan, about an actress who hopes to win back her estranged lover by playing Orlando to her Rosalind in a production of "As You Like It." (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

TALKING HEADS

In six exquisite cameos translated from television to the stage and divided between two shows, the British actor and playwright Alan Bennett's skills as a miniaturist are on display, and he misses nothing. Each monologue conjures up a desiccated universe with scrupulously observed detail. Kathleen Chalfant is excellent as an alcoholic vicar's wife who has an affair with an Indian shopkeeper in "Bed Among the Lentils," and Lynn Redgrave shines in the show's most memorable monologue, "Miss Fozzard Finds Her Feet." With a fluting daftness worthy of Ronald Firbank, she regales us with the story of a woman's unusual liaison with her chiropodist. Directed by Michael Engler. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 212-307-4100.)

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

In a new production at the Jean Cocteau Repertory, Marivaux's Age of Enlightenment comedy of manners is as sweet and weightless as the jack-in-the-box music that bookends the performance. Romantic deception is permissible so long as the intentions are good, and when hearts are broken, nobody seems hurt. Rod McLucas's sugary new translation lives up to Marivaux's lofty ideals, and the cast delivers many a line with near-perfect comic timing, but some decisions—such as the one to dress the apple-cheeked Princess Leonidis (Amanda Jones) in a silky lavender karate uniform as she woos a philosopher, his sister, and his student—do not feel all that enlightened. David Fuller directs. (Bouwerie Lane, 330 Bowery. 212-677-0060.)

TRUMBO

The lively correspondence of the screenwriter and author Dalton Trumbo ("Spartacus," "Roman Holiday," "Johnny Got His Gun")—a member of the "Hollywood Ten" who was imprisoned during the McCarthy era—has been turned into a play by his son, Christopher. Five different stars alternate in the lead role: Ed Harris, Tim Robbins, Richard Dreyfuss, Alec Baldwin, and Chris Cooper. Directed by Peter Askin. Mondays only. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. Closes May 5.)

URBAN COWBOY

This musical is big, brash, eager to please, and none too subtle. The story is the same as in the 1980 film with John Travolta and Debra Winger: small-town Texan comes to Houston, meets girl, falls in love, marries girl, then gets rattled by her need to ride the mechanical bull at the local beer hall. The savvy director, Lonny Price, keeps the action going, leaving out the explication. What the show lacks in depth the singers and dancers make up for with energy, verve, and well-toned calves and abs, but it's hard to feel anything strongly about the performers except that they are too heavily miked. With Matt Cavenaugh as Bud, Sally Mayes as his funny Aunt Corene, Jenn Colella as his girl, Sissy, and Marcus Chait as Wes, a sexy spoiler who snakes his way in between Bud and Sissy. Choreographed by Melinda Roy, with musical direction by Jason Robert Brown. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE WOMEN OF LOCKERBIE

Deborah Brevoort's 1998 play looks at the effect that the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 had on the families of those on the plane and on the residents of Lockerbie, Scotland, where it exploded, to explore many facets of grief. The show consists of little more than people talking through a nightlong memorial for the victims several years after the tragedy. But that's enough: although there are moments when the script is shrill or too pat, over all this is a moving, thoughtful exploration of how grief changes over time. Larry Pine's performance, as an American father, and Jenny Sterlin's, as a Scottish mother, are particularly grounded and powerful. Directed by Scott Elliott, with a bleakly beautiful set by Derek McLane. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 212-279-4200. Closes May 11.)

A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD

Don't look for frog suits in this new musical based on the children's books by Arnold Lobel, now at the Cort. Mark Linn-Baker, as Toad, and Jay Goede, as Frog, put across their characters' differing outlooks on life with nothing much more than bow ties, snowshoes, and attitude. With a set

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LOUIS VUITTON

by Adrianne Lobel, costumes by Martin Pakledinaz, and lighting by James F. Ingalls. Directed by David Petrarca. (138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

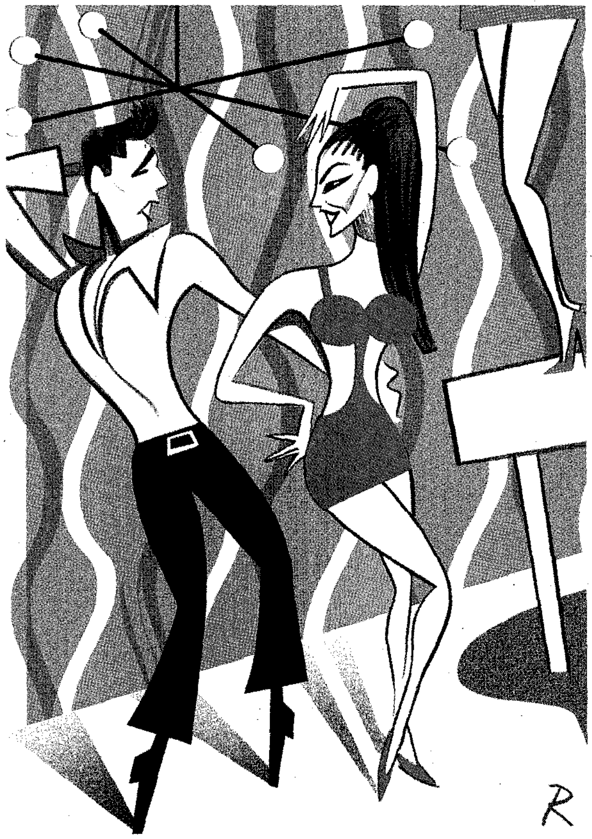
ZANNA, DON'T!
All the students at Heartsville High are gay, so calamity ensues when the football quarterback and the female lead in the school play (about heterosexuals in the military) notice that they have feelings for each other. This perky and adorable musical is so bubble-gum flavored that it could almost cause sugar shock—but the wit of the script cuts the sweetness. Jared Zeus, as the clumsy quarterback, and Anika Larsen, as a white soul-singing lesbian, stand out in the youthful, talented cast. Directed and choreographed by Devanand Janki. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.
BARBRA'S WEDDING
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.
BARTENDERS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-868-4444.
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.
BLUE MAN GROUP
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 212-254-4370.
LA BOHÈME
Broadway, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.
CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.
CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.
DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.
THE EXONERATED
45 Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.
42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.
FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.
HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY
Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.
I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.
MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.
MAN OF LA MANCHA
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 212-921-8000.
RUSSELL SIMMONS' DEF POETRY JAM ON BROADWAY
Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.
SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 212-477-2477.
TEA AT FIVE
Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.
THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.
THWAK
New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. (Closes April 27.)
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.
URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.
VINCENT IN BRIXTON
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

PASCAL RIOULT DANCE THEATRE
After spending three years choreographing dance to Ravel's music, Rioult has now turned his attention to Stravinsky. "Veneziana," set to the composer's "Pulcinella Suite," drops the ballet's commedia-dell'arte story but retains its puppet-show poses and satirical spirit. Starting behind a scrim depicting eighteenth-century Venice, the dance pierces social conventions with sexual comedy and even includes a few good-humored jabs at Rioult's one-time boss Martha Graham. To make "Black Diamond," Rioult studied the bucolic poetry that inspired Stravinsky's "Duo Concertant," for piano and violin. Rioult calls it "an exercise in choreographic versification." Like the music, the dance is a rivalrous duet for two virtuoso performers with very different instruments: the forceful Lorena Egan and the vixenish Penelope Gonzalez. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. April 17 at 7:30, April 18 at 8, April 19 at 2 and 8, and April 20 at 2 and 7:30.)



Jonathan Dokuchitz and Shannon Lewis dance to the music of Burt Bacharach and Hal David, in "The Look of Love."

ROBERT RISKO

INBAL PINTO DANCE COMPANY
Just in from Tel Aviv, Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak have come to town with their twelve-member troupe to perform their daintily macabre "Oyster," a circusy production inspired by Tim Burton's short story "The Melancholic Death of Oyster Boy." The dancers are guided by visible or imaginary strings: a woman tiptoes along her partner's arm in a luscious duet, held aloft by a rope; dishevelled ballerinas in ragged tutus dip into limber backbends; and men in pointy, moth-eaten coattails scrabble for support, their legs giving way under them before they manage to bob back up. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. April 22-26 at 8 and April 27 at 2 and 7:30.)

SIDESHOW
Symphony Space presents a dance-theatre series on its downstairs Thalia stage. The Brazilian choreographer Patricia Hoffbauer performs an ensemble work that blends dance and non-sequitur narrative on April 17-18, and the following week Chris Yon and Justin Jones present their neo-vaudeville revue, "The Chris and Justin Medicine Show." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. April 17-18 and April 24-25 at 8:30.)

DANSPACE PROJECT
Joyce S. Lim and Nami Yamamoto present "In/Flux," a piece that strives to evoke a society in which people are not defined by stereotypical ethnic or national labels. With music by Guy Yarden, lighting by Sue Poulin, and costumes by Naoko Nagata. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. April 24-26 at 8:30 and April 27 at 7:30.)

"REPORT ON BODY"
The choreographer Wen Hui, the filmmaker Wu Wenguang, and the Living Dance Studio, all Beijing-based, come to Dance Theatre Workshop with their multimedia dance "Report on Body," which uses a woman's body as a metaphor to examine life in China at the outset of the twenty-first century. (Bessie Schönberg Theatre, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0777. April 17-19 at 7 and April 20 at 2.)

"EXTRA DRY"
Dance Theatre Workshop's "WorldWideWorks" series continues with a collaboration by the Italian choreographer Emio Greco and the Dutch theatre director Pieter C. Scholten. On a shimmering golden set, Greco dances a duet with Barbara Meneses Gutierrez. (Bessie Schönberg Theatre, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0777. April 24-26 at 7 and April 27 at 2.)

"YIELD"
In a conceptual piece choreographed by Liz Gerring, her ensemble group tracks small, detailed gestures and patterns while Michael J. Schumacher and his group Strata accompany them with live electronic music. Set design by Hilary Taub. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11. April 24-26 at 8.)

"SHADOWMANN, PART II"
In Part II of Sarah Michelson's architecturally allusive Bauhaus dance event, the regimented, intentionally impenetrable dances of Part I (which were performed recently in the cavernous Kitchen space) are deconstructed in a snug, burrowlike downstairs room at P.S. 122. (150 First Ave. 212-477-5288. April 16-20 and April 23-27 at 7:30.)

"UNDER WHOSE CONTROL"
AMDaT presents a conceptual dance inspired by a remark of the philosopher E. M. Cioran, "To be is to be cornered." Five women literally dance themselves into a corner of a room and up the walls that flank it (both an actual corner and a duplicate, sculptural corner are involved), like Spider-Man in slo-mo. (On View Studio, 338 Berry St., at S. 4th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-218-8236. April 19-20 and April 26-27 at 2, 3, and 4.)

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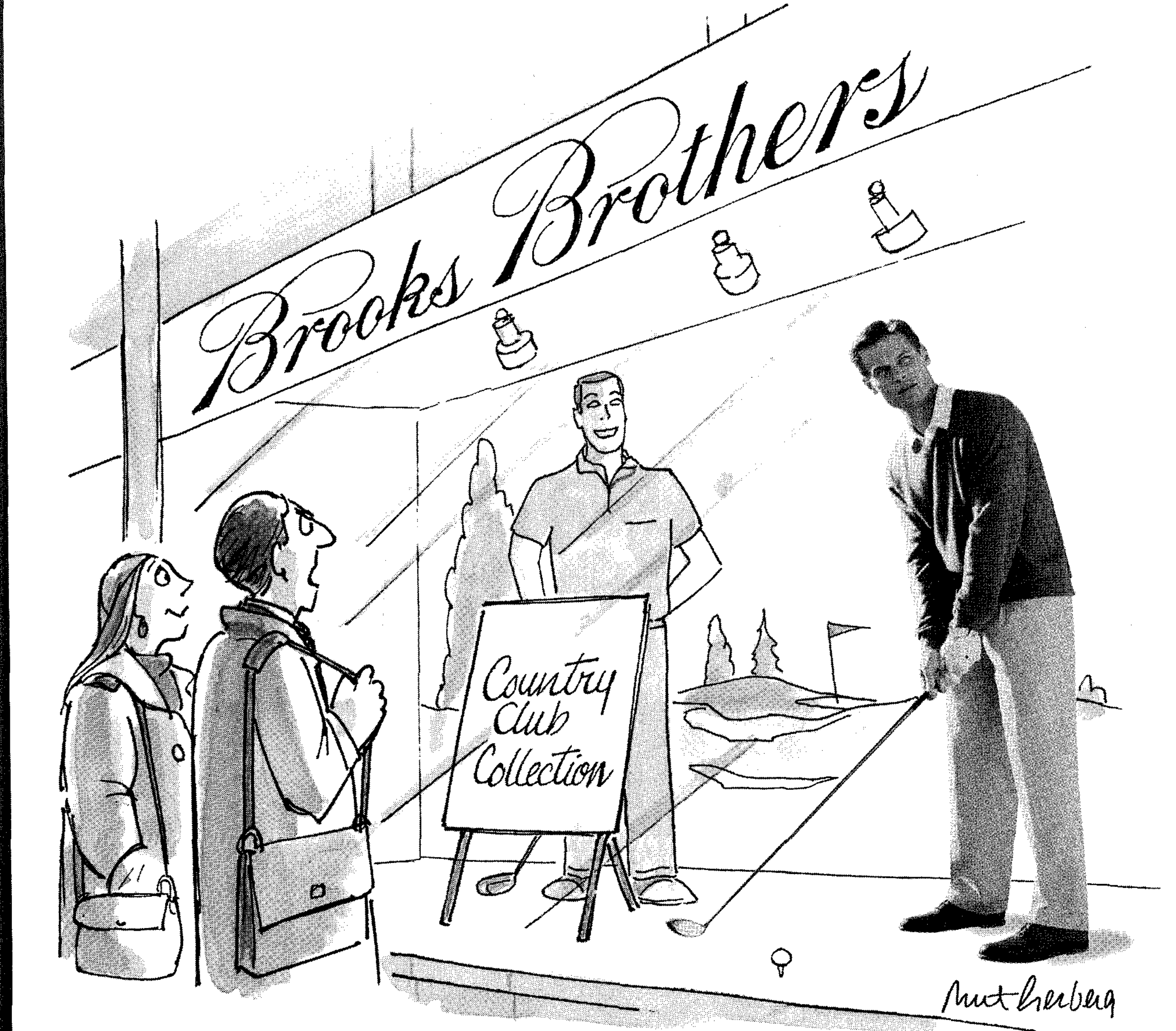

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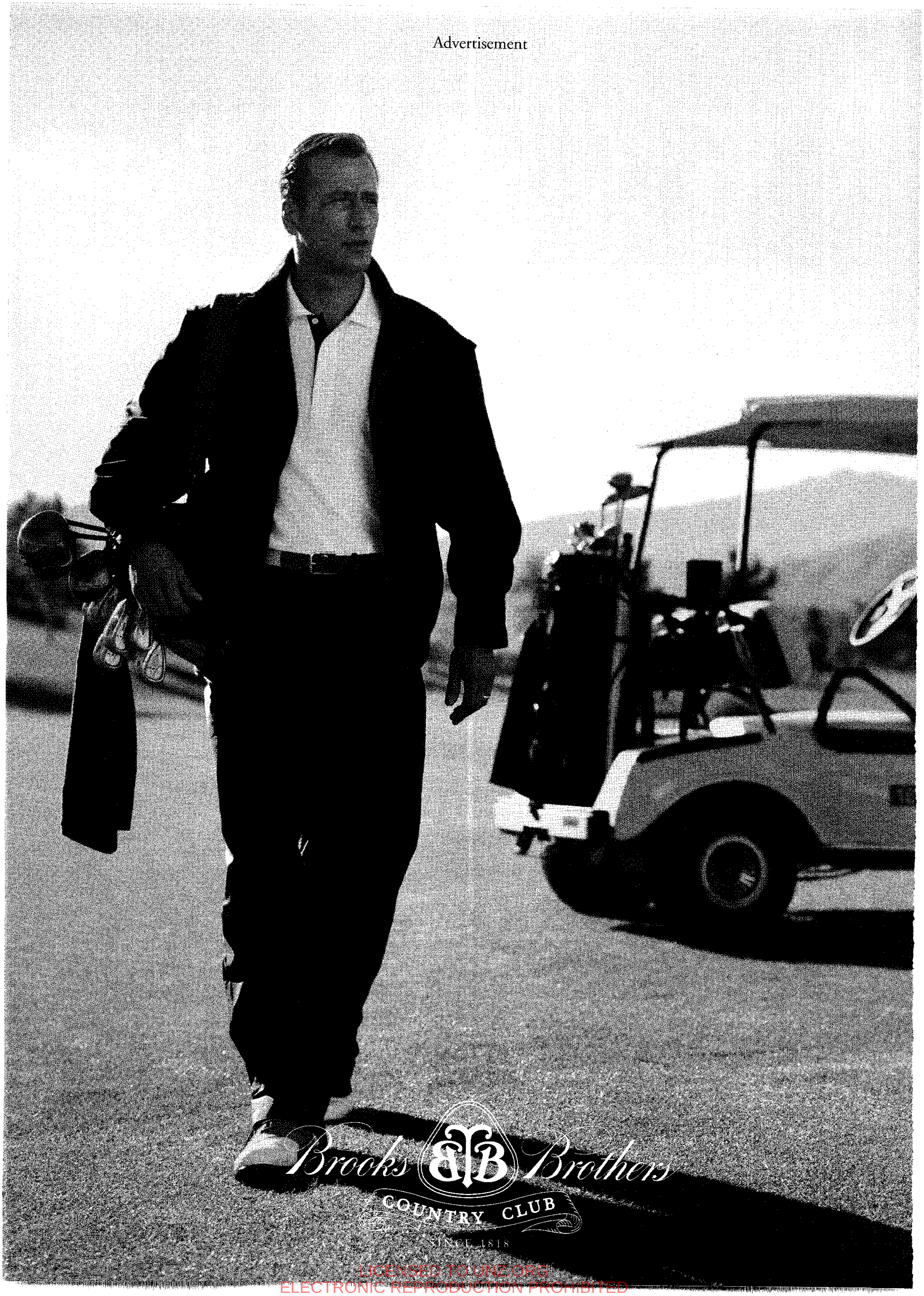
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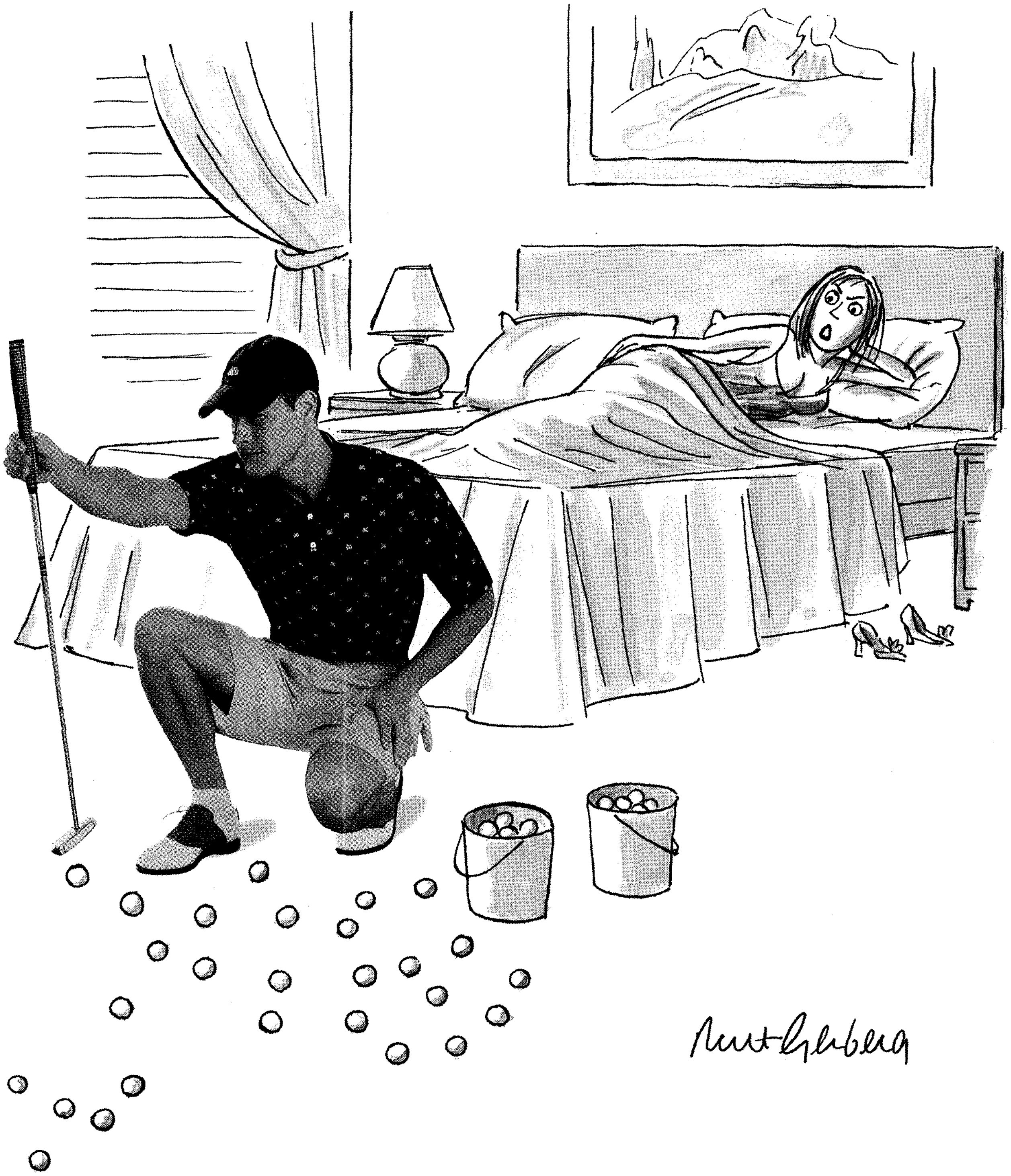

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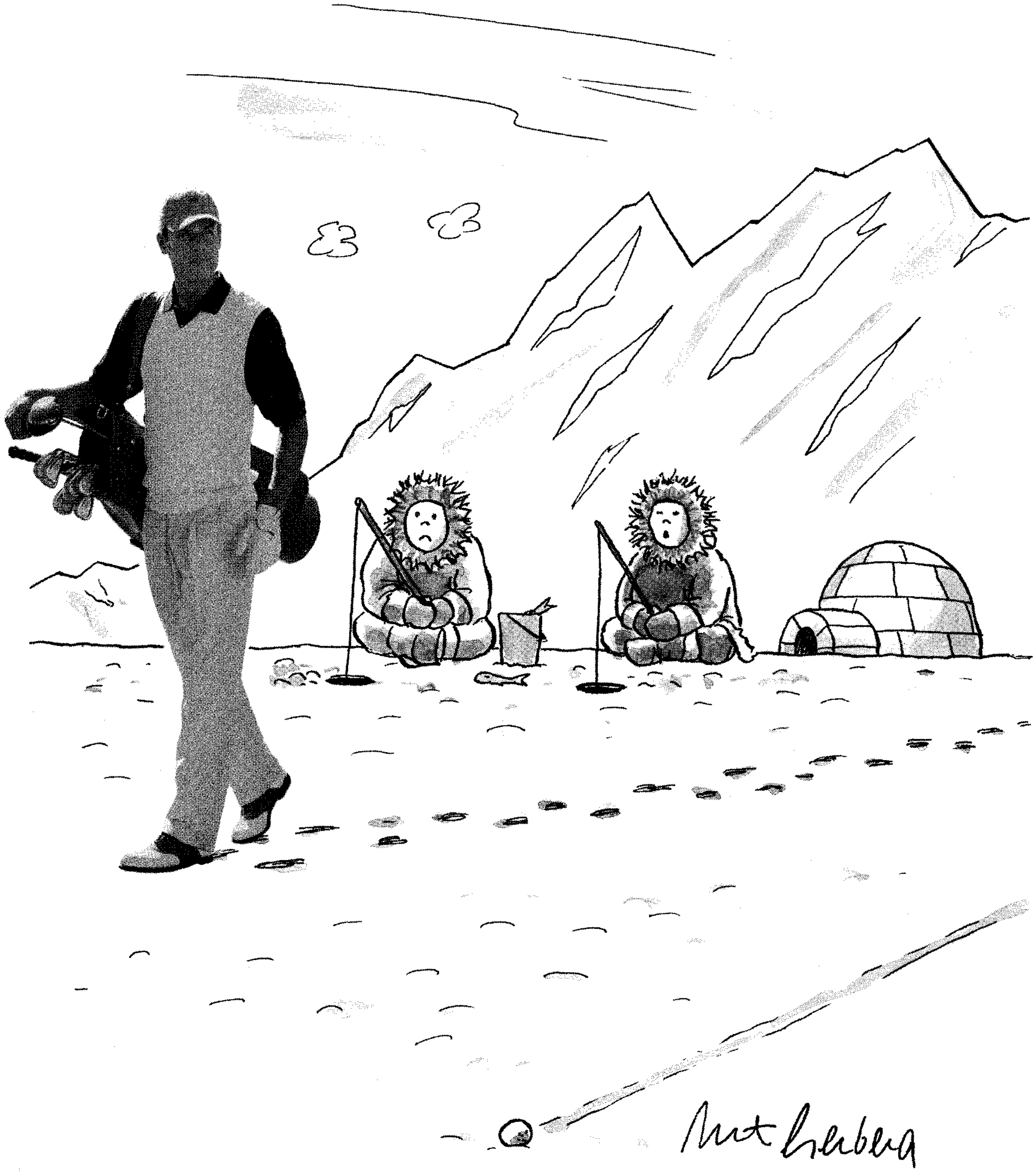

"Oh, he's famous for being very long off the tee, but with an extremely poor sense of direction."

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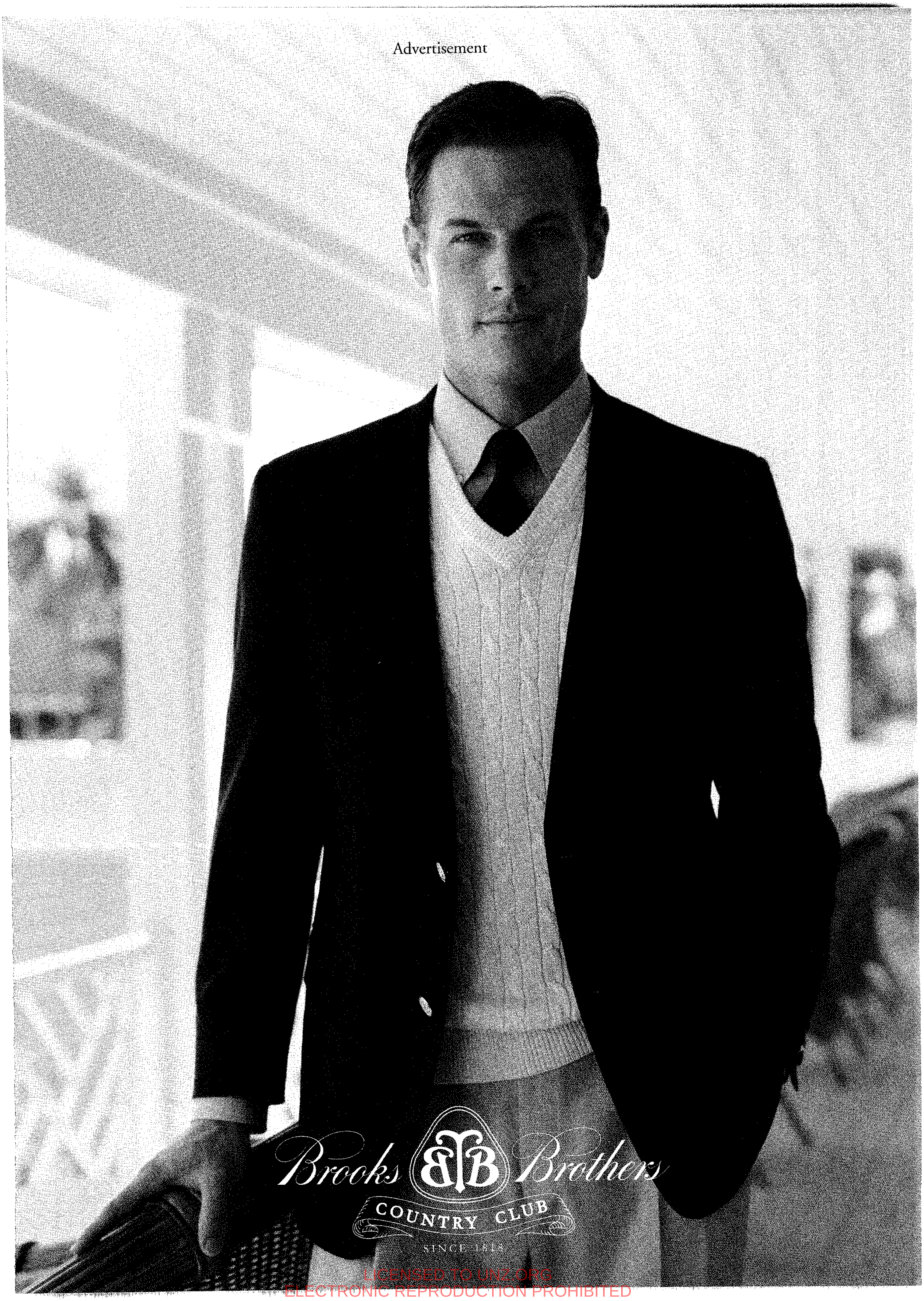
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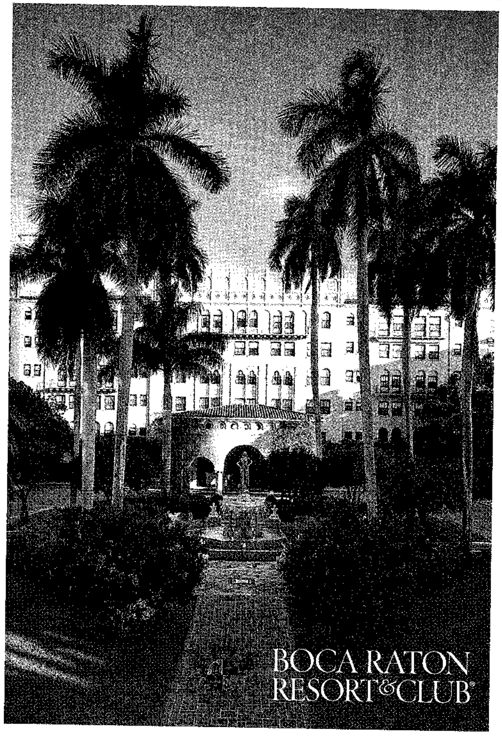

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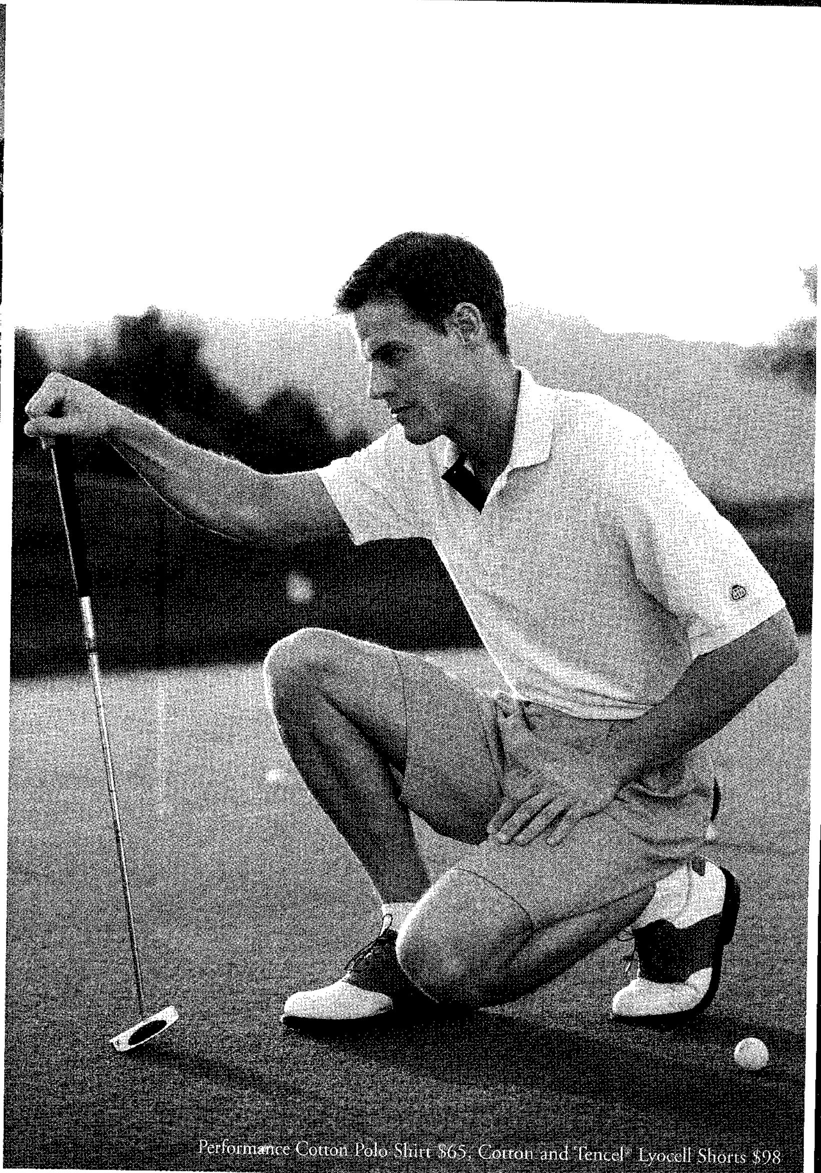

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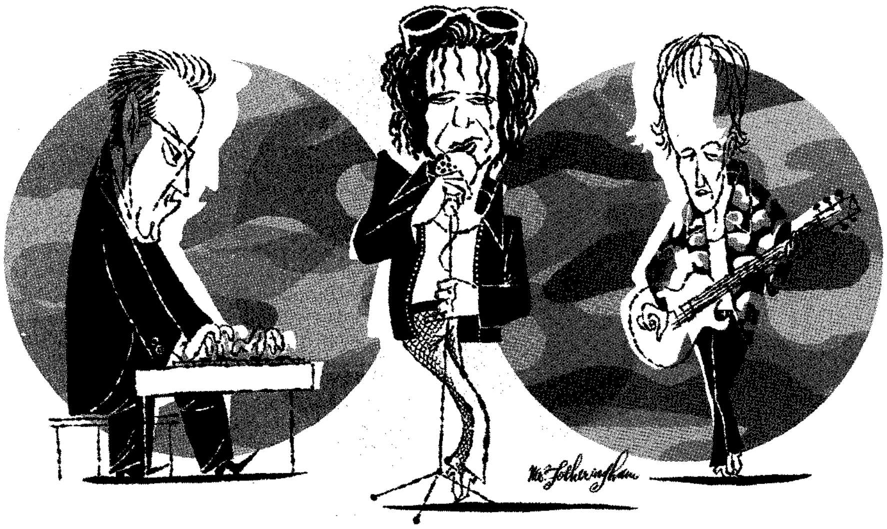

Ian Astbury channels the Lizard King as the Doors play Roseland.

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

BERES HAMMOND
The great and soulful reggae vocalist. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. April 18 at 8.)

LIL MALCOLM & THE HOUSEROCKERS
Top-shelf zydeco music from southwestern Louisiana. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 212-685-7597. April 20 at 7:30.)

TODD RUNDGREN
The seventies radio tunesmith turned tireless producer and technological gearhead. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-840-2824. April 23 at 8.)

CHEAP TRICK
Deftly fusing Beatle-esque pop with hard-rock muscle, the legendary Rockford, Illinois, band had its heyday in the late seventies with radio-friendly hits full of humor and potent hooks. They've continued to churn out albums, and in the process have become an American institution. With the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and the Anniversary. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 212-307-7171. April 24 at 7:30.)

THE DOORS
Less the genuine article than a highly litigious cover band, this reincarnation of the sixties psychedelic magicians features the original members Ray Manzarek on keyboards and Robby Krieger on guitar, alongside the erstwhile Cult singer and avowed Jim Morrison disciple Ian Astbury. The ex-Police drummer, Stewart Copeland, was slated to play drums, but a few lawsuits later, the rhythm section on tour (now including a bass) is being handled by a pair of L.A. musicians. Early reports from the road reveal, surprisingly, that the group has, at least musically, broken through to the other side with its ideals intact. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. April 24 at 8.)

YO LA TENGO
The Hoboken trio settles in for a night of atmospheric songs from its latest album, "Summer Sun." (Beacon Theatre. April 25 at 7:30.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
The bang-for-your-buck concert of the year ropes together four of the leading names in jazz. **Wynton Marsalis's** practiced septet gets beefed up with the addition of star saxophonist **Joe Lovano;** the bassist **Dave Holland,** lately heard fronting a big band, returns to the comfort of his assertive quintet; and the venerated tenor saxophonist **Michael Brecker** appears with a quartet. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. April 25 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Hemingway saw **Orquesta Aragón** play at the Tropicana during the nineteen-fifties, in Batista's Havana. This celebrated and beloved *charanga* band keeps on cruising, like some miraculously preserved V-8 wonder from the era of rum cocktails, cigars, and hard-swinging cha-cha-cha. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. For more information, call 212-545-7536. April 25 at 8.)

THE FLAMING LIPS
Oklahoma's weirdest exports live and die by the mind of bandleader Wayne Coyne, who likes to design tripped-out soundscapes and concert experiences. (Roseland. April 25 at 8.)

THE SIDNEY BECHET SOCIETY
The saxophonist Michael Hashim honors the great New Orleans jazzman as he leads an ensemble that includes Jon-Erik Kellso, Eddie Davis, and Matt Munisteri. (Greenwich Village Center, 219 Sullivan St. For more information, call 516-627-4468. April 27 at 6:15 and 8:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—April 16-18: The wonderfully nuanced, narcotic pop of the **Sea and Cake,** which is touring in support of its new release, "One Bedroom." April 19: Emo rock meets electronica in the **Postal Service.**

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—The April 18 installment of the **Maison du Chic** party features the microchip-based beats of My Robot Friend, Gater, and other artists on Munich's Dekathlon Records. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—April 26: Sprung from the fertile era of eighties college rock, New England's **Throwing Muses** emerged alongside label-mates the Pixies as a willfully eccentric band of ethereal surrealists with a punk aesthetic. After multiple changes in lineup and the occasional breakup, Muses architect Kristin Hersh has re-formed the band. This performance includes a special appearance by the original member Tanya Donnelly. April 29: The au-courant synth pop of **Ladytron.**

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—April 17: **Mark Gardener.** The onetime lead singer and guitarist of Ride and a leading figure during Britain's early nineties "shoegazer" era (rather cruelly coined to describe a lack of dynamic stage presence) takes a solo turn. April 18: **That1guy** is Mike Silverman, a one-man-band wonder from Northern California who plays his homemade "magic pipe," a one-stringed upright

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

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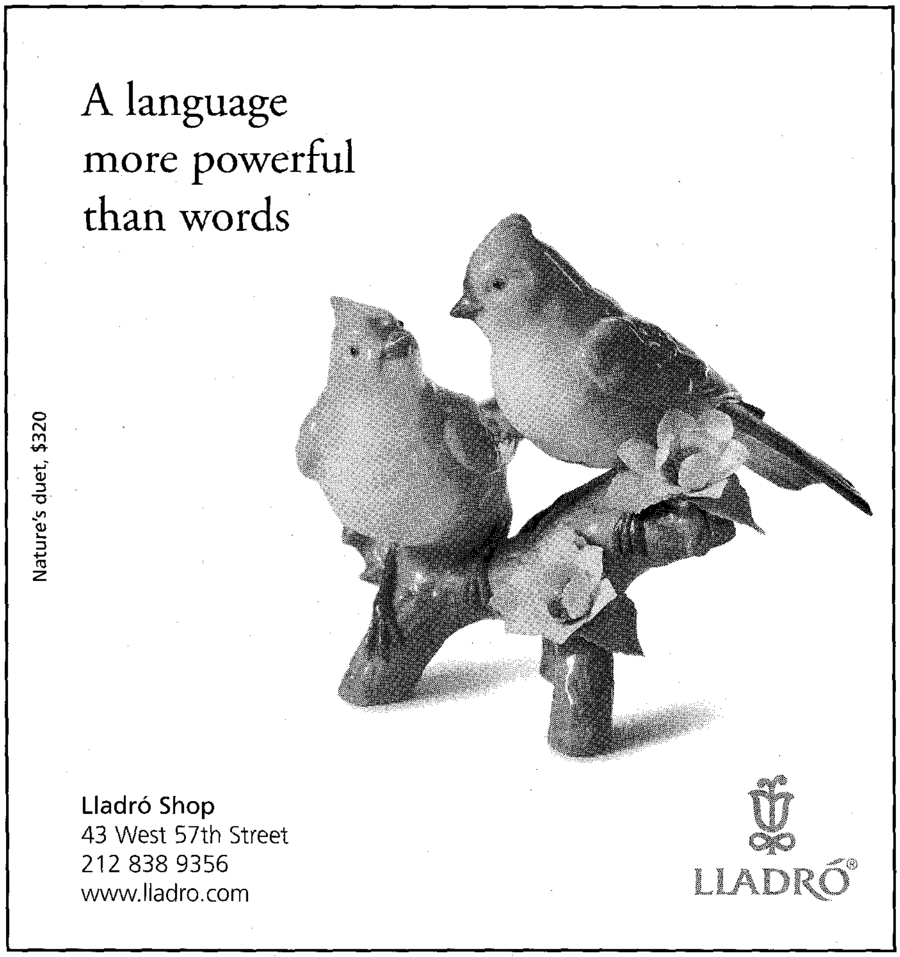
AND: A calendar of *New Yorker* events across the country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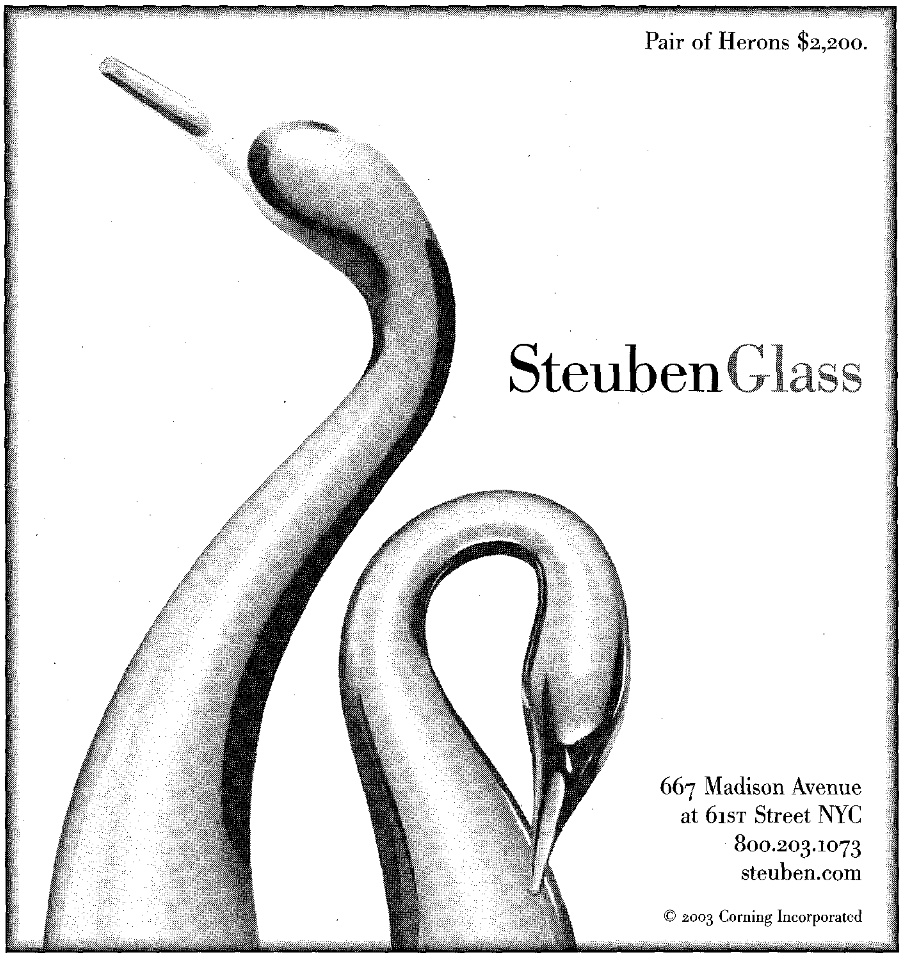
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bass that also produces raucous drum and electronic samples. He sings from the gut, too. April 26: **Lydia Lunch,** the irascible matriarch of No Wave agitation, returns to the stage backed by the creepy electronic ambient band the Anubian Nights.

RODEO BAR
375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500)—April 19: A night of old-fashioned rockabilly with **Deke Dickerson and the Ecco-Fonics.**

SIN-É
150 Attorney St. (212-388-0077)—April 18: New York's **Botanica** traffics in sonic noir with an undercurrent of sinewy menace. With **Bee & Flower,** a haunting Brooklyn-based quintet that specializes in dark songs with lilting violin lines and fine lap-steel playing. April 26: The elegantly gritty instrumental trio **Big Lazy.**

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—April 18-19: **Antibalas,** a multiracial Afrobeat ensemble from Williamsburg, Brooklyn, that takes its musical and political inspiration from Fela Kuti.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—April 25: The Brazilian guitarist **Vinicius Cantuaria** and the downtown stalwart **John Zorn** meet up for an evening of improvisation. April 26-27: The hometown group **Angels of Light** celebrate their fine new record, "Everything Is Good Here/Please Come Home," as they wind up a nationwide tour. The band's leader, Michael Gira, has for twenty years pushed fiercely against lyrical and musical boundaries. In the early eighties he founded the legendary New York group Swans and took those nihilists on an unexpected arc from primal songs with sadomasochistic overtones to lush and beautiful pieces with soaring strings and rich melodies. This will be a somewhat sparser lineup than past incarnations, with some beautiful lap-steel-guitar playing, bass, and **Devendra Banhart** (also performing on his own on April 26) joining in on guitar and vocals. Also with **Barbez** on April 26.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through May 24: The vocalist **Karen Akers** offers a program of show tunes, including selections from "Nine," "Brigadoon," and "Grand Hotel." Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through April 20: At this stage of the game, the bluesman **James Cotton** is a bona-fide patriarch. Turning out to honor the harmonica wizard are some of the most notable names on the contemporary blues circuit: the multi-instrumentalist **Lucky Peterson** (April 15-16), the guitarist **Joe Louis Walker** (April 17-18), and the vocalist **Shemekia Copeland** on the final two nights. April 22-27: The remarkably versatile singer-pianist **Diane Schuur.** Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, April 22-May 3, the Broadway veteran **James Naughton.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Loston Harris** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through April 20: A guitar aficionado's favorite, the fleet-fingered **Mike Stern** receives high-profile support from the electric bassist **Richard Bona** and the drummer **Terri Lyne Carrington.** April 24-27: The Hammond organ was certainly around before the mid-fifties, when **Jimmy Smith** started messing with it, but can anyone remember what it was used for? His influence is so pervasive that his name has become practically synonymous with the instrument. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—April 19-20: The innovative composer and im-

proviser Henry Threadgill and his band **Zooid**—your basic saxophone, oud, tuba, guitar, cello, and drums outfit. April 21-22: The saxophonist **Steve Coleman** and his band **Five Elements.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—April 18-20: There's no thinking small for the vibraphonist **Stefon Harris,** who brings in a beefed-up band to present music from his sweeping new album, "Grand Unification Theory." April 29: The **Bill Mays** trio. One of the great bands nobody knows ("Going Home," their sparkling new release, should solve that), this indivisible group boasts a marvellous bassist (**Martin Wind**) and drummer (**Matt Wilson**) as well as its mainstream leader on piano. Dining.

UP OVER JAZZ CAFÉ
351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—April 25-26: The **Valery Ponomarev** quintet. Thirty years after making his name with Art Blakey, the trumpeter Ponomarev is still the poster boy for Russian hard bop.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through April 20: **Don Byron,** the virtuoso clarinettist, may flit from style to style within the course of any given year, but he's not fooling around. His Music for Six Musicians band delves into the Latin jazz that Byron has played since he was a teen-ager; it's stocked with experienced players committed to both rhythmic pleasure and to the leader's ambitions. April 22-27: Through sheer tenacity and the application of a vocal talent that has steadily ripened with the passing years, **Carol Sloane** has become one of the grandes dames of jazz singing. Her knowing interpretations of lyrics and sly phrasing should be closely studied by the new generation of chanteuses. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"Manet/Velázquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting,"** a ravishing and keenly illuminating show, marshalls great paintings to demonstrate a miracle in art history: the rebirth of Spanish Baroque painting in nineteenth-century Paris, brought about by Édouard Manet. At one end of its two-century leap, the show is augmented with works by Zurbarán, Murillo, and other Spaniards, and, at the other, by relevant figures from Delacroix to Sargent. But the summit meeting of Velázquez and Manet dominates. Through June 8. ♦ A mid-career retrospective of the photographs and video portraits of the German photographer Thomas Struth. Through May 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—Even what's wrong with **"Matisse Picasso,"** the magnificent show that deploys a hundred and thirty-three works by the twin godheads of modern painting, is revelatory. It is a double-barrelled blast of an exhibition with a popgun thesis: that Picasso and Matisse goaded and influenced each other. So do most artistic contemporaries. In any case, trying to absorb fine curatorial points of comparison between such stunners as Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" and Matisse's "Bathers with a Turtle" is like trying to check the oil in a speeding truck. The show's payoff comes from the jagged, overwhelming sense it gives of how different the two were as men and artists—as antithetical, and evenly matched, as Ali and Frazier. Through May 19. (Open Thursdays, Sundays, and Mondays, 10 to 5, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Matthew Barney: The Cremaster Cycle."** Through June 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

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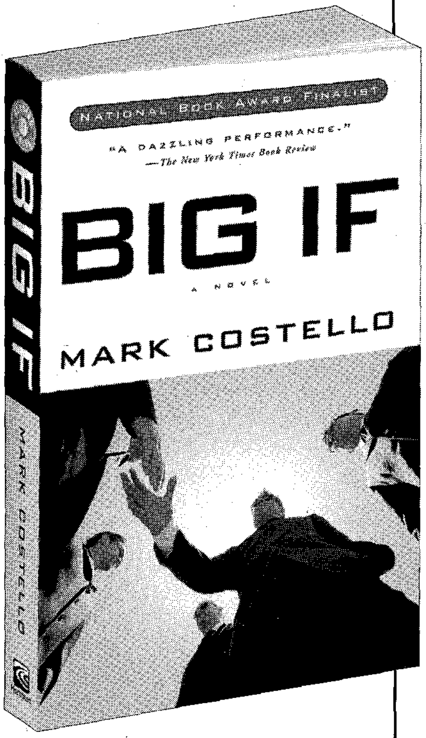

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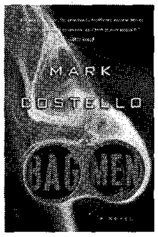

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WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Paul Sietsema: Empire"** presents the chef d'œuvre of an experimental filmmaker: a ragged twenty-four-minute silent 16-mm. film that bristles with pans, fades, jump cuts, and so on of static objects in negative black and white or red and white. The main subjects are beautifully made models of an eighteenth-century French rococo interior and of Clement Greenberg's art-filled living room in 1964—shrines of extreme taste, which Sietsema's camera explores like a tongue probing broken teeth. (The models and some related drawings are displayed elsewhere.) The film's hermetic fervor becomes as disquieting as urgent warnings in a language that you don't quite understand. Sequences of dizzying geometric animation and ominous closeups of a grasshopper vary the spell. Through June 8. ♦ **"Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio,"** a retrospective featuring the designs of the husband-and-wife team. Through May 25. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

GROLIER CLUB
47 E. 60th St. (212-838-6690)—The books crafted by Walter Hamady & The Perishable Press Limited are celebrated for the quality and composition of their handmade paper, hand-set type, and hand-stitched binding. But what's most special about these artisanal volumes are the colophons: they set forth relevant information about the book's production, then add thank-yous, mini manifestos, and homespun maxims. A 1980 edition of Paul Blackburn's "The Selection of Heaven" contends that "the best thing about being dumb is you get to learn something new every day!" And a note to a 1983 edition of Blackburn's "The Omitted Journals" reveals the printer's secret: "Every book has a definite spirit that clearly emerges in the transaction between the manuscript and the printed page." Through April 26. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN
40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535)—**"William Morris: Elegy"** is an exhibition of sixty-five blown-glass cinerary urns displayed on the walls of a tomblike enclosure. Morris, who is known for blowing glass into the shapes of bones, took up this project after a series of personal and shared losses: his mother passed away within weeks of the deaths of several other friends and mentors. Then September 11th came along. Overtaken by grief, Morris created urns as a kind of therapy. Each is individual. Some look as stone-faced as ancient serving vessels, while others glow with the intensity of a beating heart. Through April 22. (Open daily, 10 to 6; Thursday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

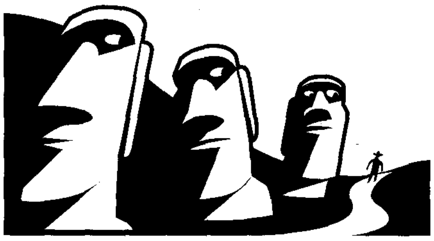
Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

NELL BLAINE
Blaine's first success came with her abstract paintings of the late forties, which won Clement Greenberg's approval. Soon afterward (and surely not to his pleasure), she began to paint the figures and rooms she is better known for. This show begins with the streamlined but still blocky coloring-book style of "Street Encounter," painted in 1950, and follows Blaine's confidently loosening line until it reaches abstraction from the other side, in the epic 1957 "Imaginary View of Mexico." Through April 26. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-262-5050.)

ELIE NADELMAN
This overture to Nadelman's second Whitney retrospective is full of deceptively simple prints and line drawings, ideal apéritifs for his compact, elegant sculptures. The Polish-American artist favored an iconic shape, an efficient curve, and a sweetly sexy aesthetic, and these works present versions that would have been difficult to render in his usual stone or bronze. His male figures, such as the

BOOK CURRENTS
Away from It All

When Hurricane Zoe hit the Solomon Islands last December, it took several days before anyone could reach the most remote islands, Tikopia and Anuda, to assess the damage. But isolation this extreme was precisely what the former high-school teacher Will Randall sought on Randuvu, where he taught the islanders to raise chickens. Randall narrates his agrarian adventure in **SOLOMON TIME** (Scribner), during which he happily fell into a pace of life that he says makes "schedules and timetables become irrelevancies, arrangements, meetings, deadlines inconsequential."

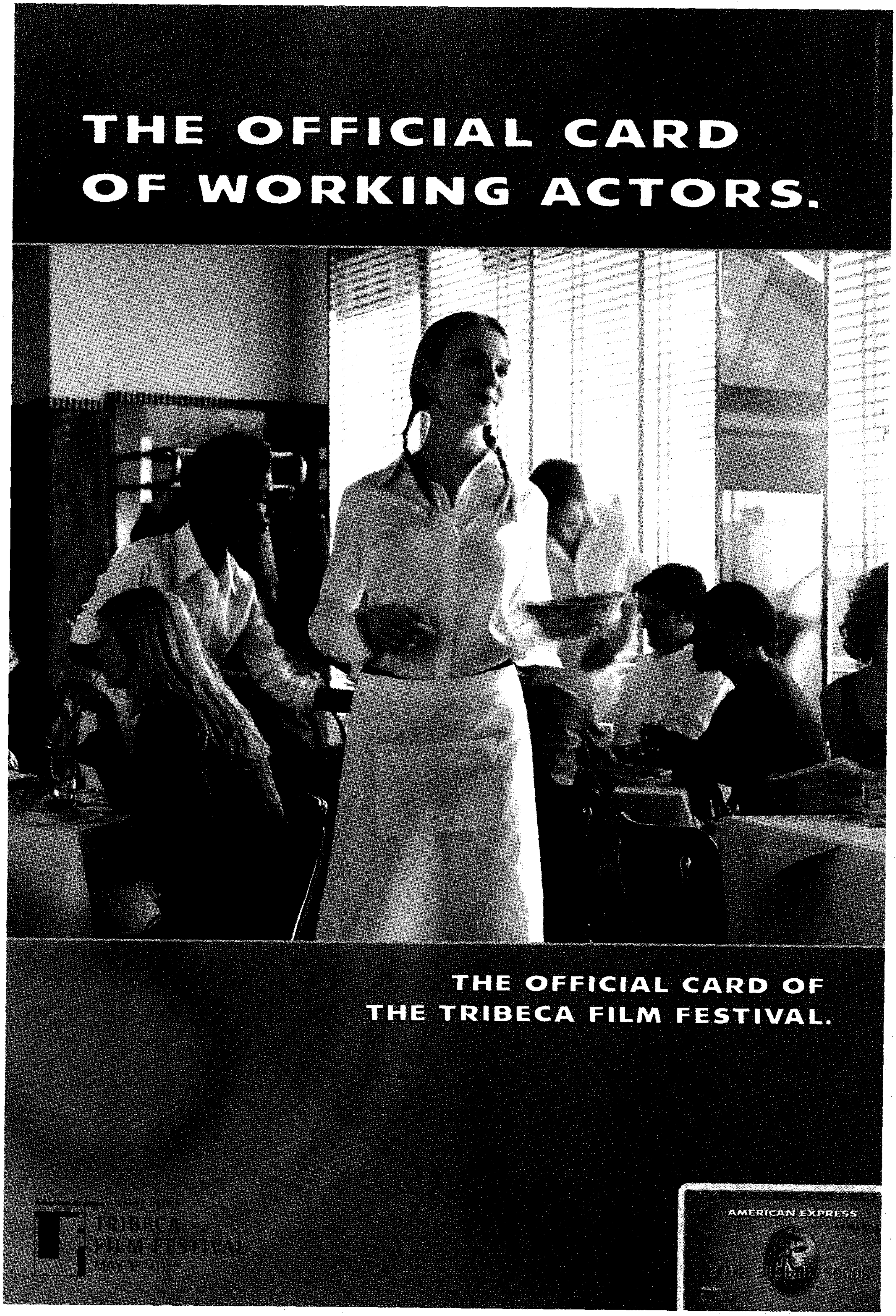


The romance of the remote also seems to have infected Katherine Routledge, who, in 1914, became one of the first archeologists to investigate Easter Island. **AMONG STONE GIANTS** (Scribner), Jo Anne Van Tilburg's biography of Routledge, tells how the island's statues provoked her to rapturous imaginings of the rituals that might have taken place there. Back in England, Routledge declined into schizophrenia—a condition her family blamed on the influence of Angata, a mysterious native visionary.

In **KRAKATOA: THE DAY THE WORLD EXPLODED** (HarperCollins), Simon Winchester focusses on more physical dangers: the seismic events of August 27, 1883, when the Javanese island vanished in a volcanic eruption of almost unimaginable power. The explosion was heard as far away as Australia, and the tidal waves that followed killed some forty thousand people. Winchester, a geologist, looks at both the aftermath of the eruption and its geological inevitability. Apparently, the island over the volatile site, where one tectonic plate slides under another, explodes with relative regularity. Krakatoa's successor, which appeared on the site in 1930, is growing at a rate of twenty feet every year.

—*Leo Carey*

RICHARD McGUIRE



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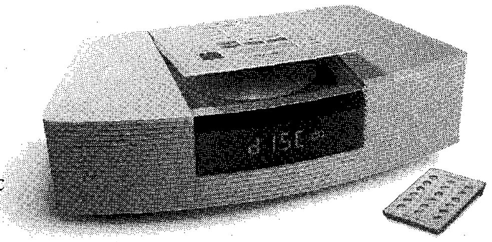

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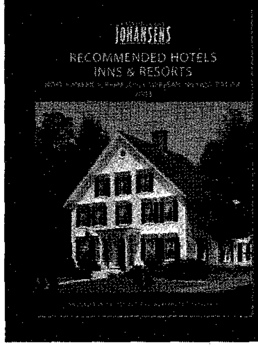

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round-hipped, trim-ankled gentleman standing stiffly by a bathtub, only confirm that his talent lay elsewhere. Through April 26. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 212-752-1223.)

GIUSEPPE PENONE
Arte Povera's naturalist, who has worked in bronze, crystal, wood, and live trees, contemplates laurels and thorns—the former cast in bronze, the latter plucked from trees. The most viscerally effective pieces are stacked grids of white silk canvases, paved with what look like dollops of molten metal but turn out to be vicious, inch-long acacia spines. The most effective works make you consider the sacrifices involved in their creation. For instance, "Spoglia d'Oro su Spine d'Acacia" includes a small square of gold leaf, imprinted with a crinkled palm print, in the center of an expanse of thorns. Through May 3. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160.)

Short List

GLENN KAINO
The Project, 427 W. 126th St. 212-662-8610.
Through April 27.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

ROSS BLECKNER
A small survey of big paintings raises doubts about the course of Bleckner's career. The best picture is the earliest, "Unknown Quantities of Light (Part 2)," from 1987, in which optically sizzling gray and white stripes are infused with intense yellow washes; it radiates a sort of magnificent unease. Recent works that use a device of sprayed circles are perfunctory by comparison. The show's centerpiece, "Bird Installation" (1995-2003), arrays scores of canvases of different sizes that embed ghostly images of birds in runny, plangent ultramarine. Through April 19. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

OMER FAST
Morally elegant videos by the Israeli-born New Yorker. "A Tank Translated" shows four interviews, on as many monitors, with ordinary young men who were the crew of an Israeli tank. They talk about what battle was like: boring and strange, mostly. The setting for "Spielberg's List," shown on two screens, is Kraków, where "Schindler's List" was shot. Holocaust sites and survivors appear along with residual movie sets and extras (who were cast as Jews or Germans, depending on their looks). Deliberate mistranslations and lacunas in the subtitles communicate the futility of trying to grasp the ungraspable. Fast's deadpan tact is as amazing as his visual flair. Spare an hour for this deeply absorbing show. Through April 26. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 212-727-3323.)

ERIC FISCHL
According to the artist, it's 1928 in Mies van der Rohe's Esters House in Krefeld, Germany. The sunlight is butter yellow, and the vases, flowers, and furniture are all burnished with a cool modernist glow, as a man and his androgynous consort—she in fuchsia bathrobe, he a creamy, meaty nude—strike attitudes of menace and languor. These hothouse scenes of sexual tension and dramatic ellipsis were staged at the Museum Haus Esters, photographed, and translated into redolently skillful paintings whose technical verve cannot offset their thematic self-importance. Through April 26. (Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.)

TONY FITZPATRICK
Fitzpatrick fills his pencil drawings with winged girls, doves made out of bricks, tough-eyed floozies in fishnets, and Holmes (Daddy-O) Daylie, Chicago's first black radio d.j., in heavy-handed scenes of angst and overstatement that nonetheless manage to achieve a lugubrious precision. (The artist was once the proprietor of a tattoo-art gallery.) Through May 3. (Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 212-741-3318.)

Short List

JOSIAH MC ELHENY
Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.
Through April 19.

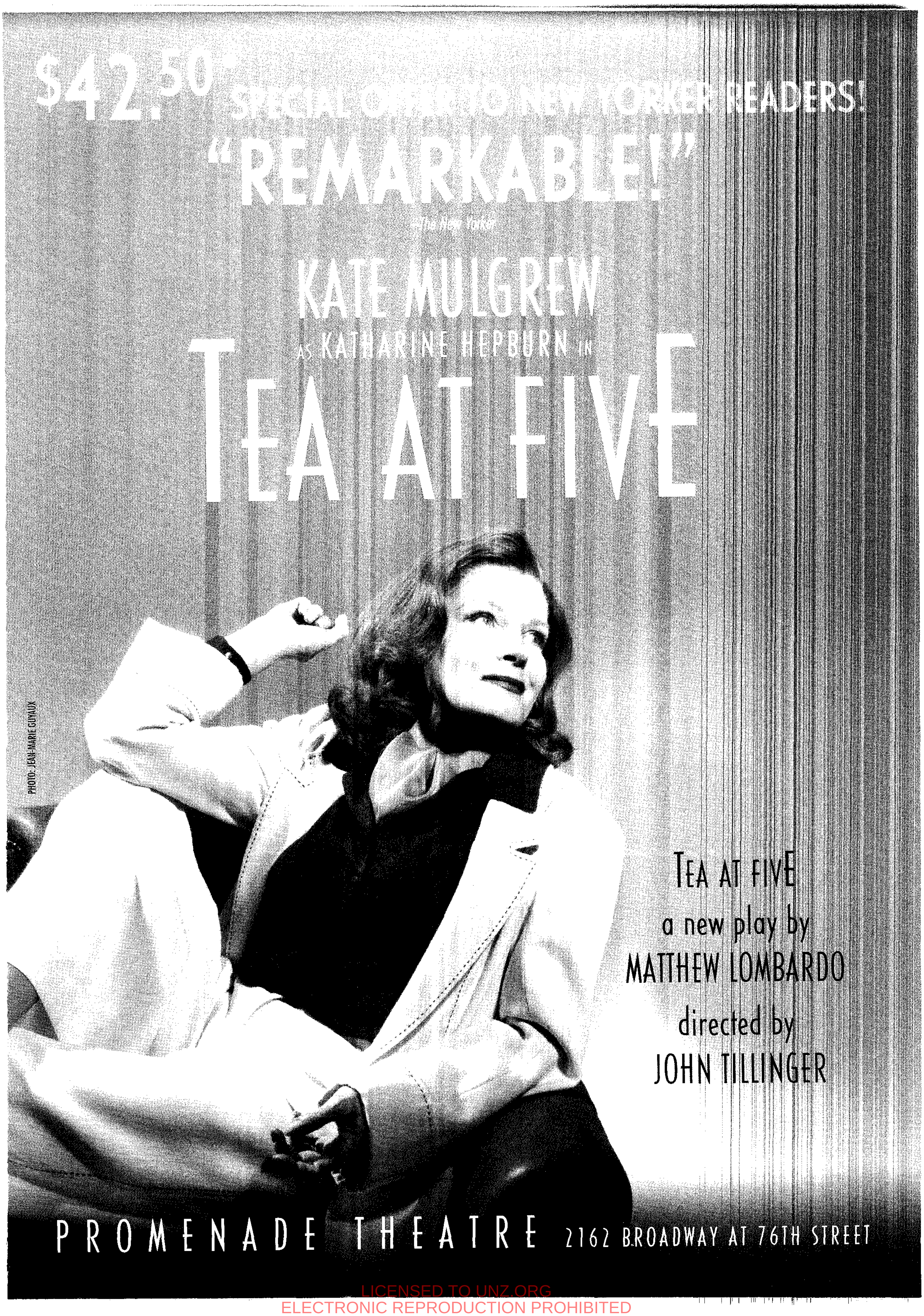

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PHOTO: JEAN-MARIE GUYAUX

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– The Today Show, NBC-TV

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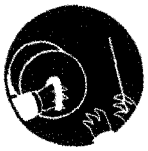
ELIZABETH MURRAY
Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-421-3292. Through April 26.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

JOHN BEECH
This connoisseur of dumpsters makes sculptures and paintings that gnaw at the (already pretty fine) distinction between construction materials and post-minimalist sculpture. This grab-bag show includes a trio of sensuously glossy "glue paintings," a group of "rotating paintings" that resemble circular saws, and a wall of sixty painted photographs that celebrate the ubiquity and diversity of dumpsters, apparently the artist's favorite urban ornament. Those who don't share Beech's infatuation may choose to skim this section, but you can't help sensing a wry, nuanced eye at work. Through April 26. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441.)

TARA DONOVAN
A beguiling show by a young sculptor who turns banal materials into wonders. Each of Donovan's projects begins with a single purchase—eighteen thousand pencils, two hundred gallons of Elmer's glue, or three million toothpicks. The newest work, "Haze," is a forty-foot-long wall made entirely of clear plastic drinking straws. Its bulging, diaphanous surface is full of little reflective eddies, as though these prosaic conduits for juice and soda were collectively willing themselves to metamor-

CLASSICAL NOTES

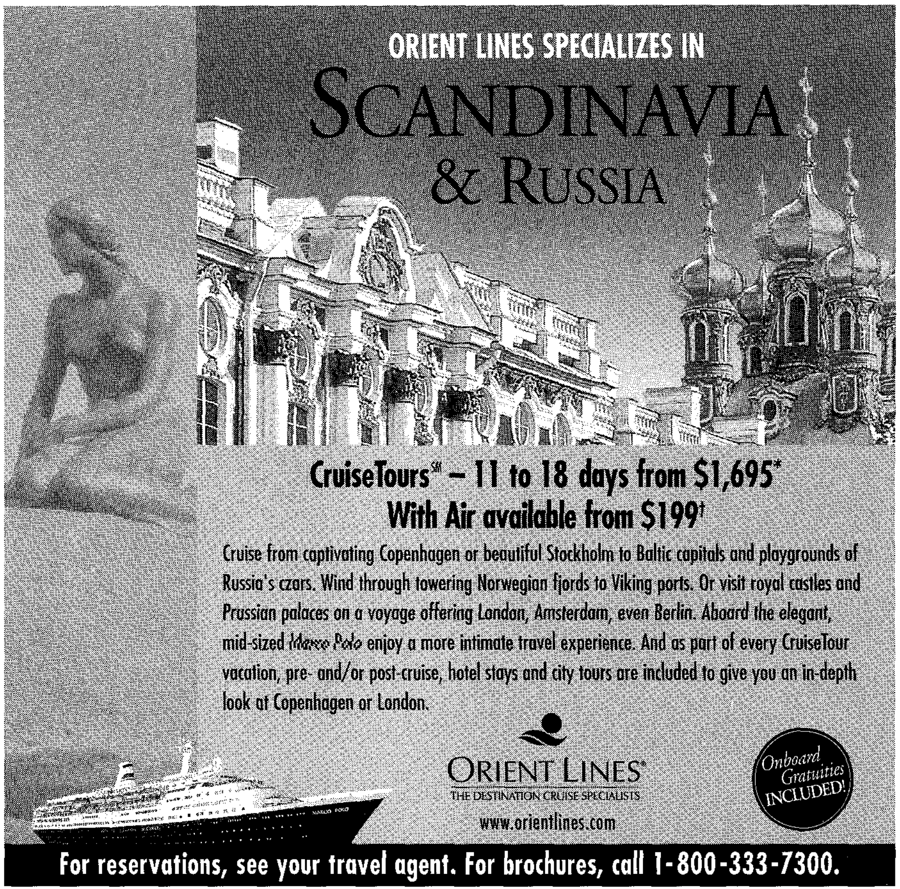


SOUNDS OF PASSION
In 1981, the musicologist Joshua Rifkin proposed a startling theory: that Bach's B-Minor Mass was first performed with one singer on each part, not by a hearty Lutheran chorale. Now Paul McCreesh, the director of London's Gabrieli Consort and Players, has applied that theory to another Eastertide favorite, the **"St. Matthew Passion,"** in a new recording on Deutsche Grammophon.

McCreesh employs just eight vocalists to cover all the choral and solo parts. This means that the first tenor sings almost all the time—and fortunately Mark Padmore is able to switch instantly from the breathless delivery of the Evangelist's storytelling to the gentler guilt-drenched lyricism of the solo arias. The singers are magnificent as a team, and the effect, when combined with the sleek and nimble performances of the instrumentalists, can be gripping—giving us a radical idea of what this piece, in its purest form, may really be.

Performance-practice issues aren't a problem in contemporary music, especially when the composers and performers are one—as in **"Extempore II,"** a rich and subtle jazz setting of the Roman Catholic Mass on Harmonia Mundi, composed by eight more Brits—the combined forces of the Orlando Consort male vocal group and the jazz quartet Perfect Houseplants. But if full-bore choral music is what you need, the label's house expert is the conductor Paul Hillier, who has recently taken over the directorship of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, a virtuoso ensemble that has made key contributions to the recent revival of Baltic music. In **"Baltic Voices I,"** they master a remarkable diversity of approaches, including the gentle, impish humor of Arvo Pärt's "Which Was the Son Of" (a setting of Jesus' list of ancestors, according to St. Luke), the Barberesque romanticism of Pēteris Vasks's "Dona Nobis Pacem," and the buzzing drones of Veljo Tormis's "Latvian Bourdon Songs," a set of mysterious and sophisticated folk settings that linger in the ear.

—Russell Platt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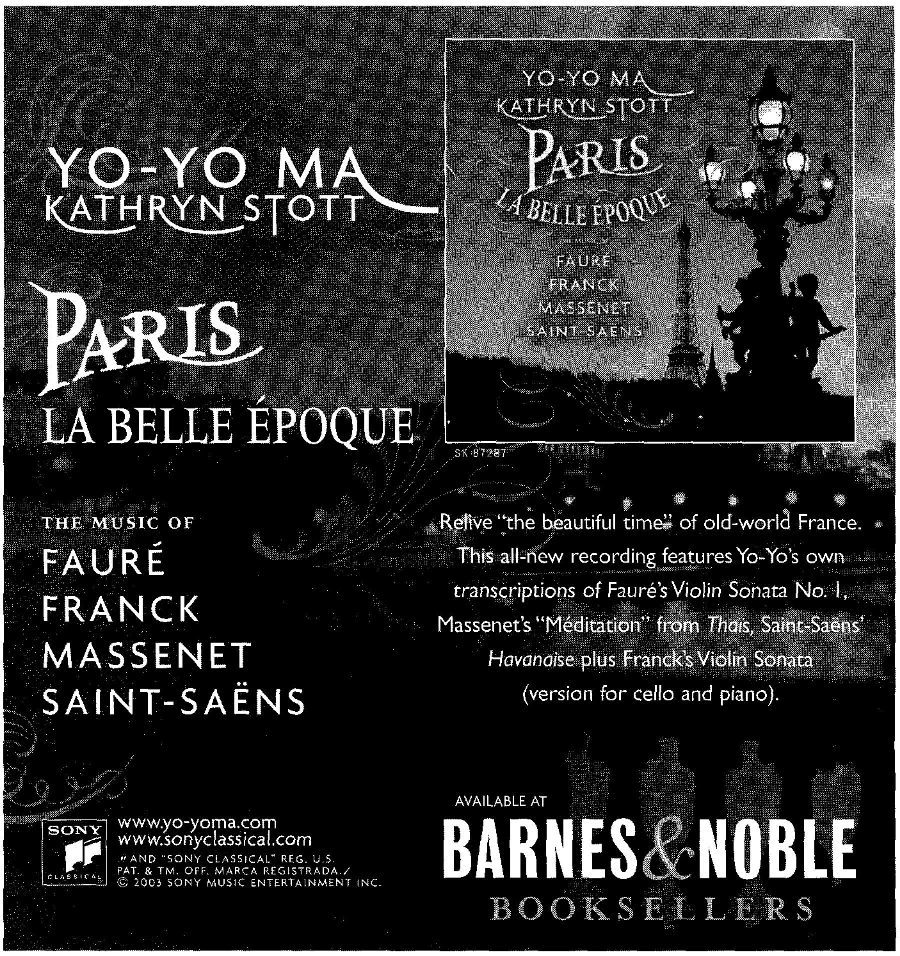
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An untitled photograph from the early thirties by Yumehara Hokume, at Greenberg.

phose into something wild and useless, like sea foam. Through May 15. (Ace, 275 Hudson St. 212-255-5599.)

ANDREW JANSONS
A retrospective commemorates this promising Latvian-born abstract painter, who died in 1989 at the age of forty-seven. Jansons's paintings, especially those from the last years of his life, have a dramatic, scribbly beauty and an insistent chiaroscuro. Squint while looking at his rhythmic channels of bright-to-dark color, and you might almost mistake them for glinting shields, limbs, and banners—as though you were seeing not third-generation Abstract Expressionism but Tiepolos by torchlight. Through June 30. (Wooster Arts Space, 147 Wooster St. 212-777-6338.)

MADONNA / STEVEN KLEIN
The Pop queen has teamed up with *Vogue* photographer Klein and the voguish architectural firm LOT/EK to create "X-STaTIC PRo=CeSS," a sort of multimedia tableau vivant that incorporates videos, photo-animations, sound, and hubris. Five projected images show Madonna limbering up in dark industrial spaces, accompanied by coyotes, flames, and what looks like a beating, transplant-ready heart. The soundtrack is a loop of breathy recitations from the Bible over a mix of techno-rhythms and gunshots. No doubt Madonna is a genius, a beauty, and a paragon of physical fitness, grace, will, and flexibility, but is she really "the Alpha and the Omega"? Through May 3. (Deitch Projects Annex, 18 Wooster St. 212-343-7300.)

Short List

ALEXANDER VINOGRADOV AND VLADIMIR DOUBOSSARSKY
Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 212-343-7300.
Through April 19.

GALLERIES—THE BRONX

"THE SESSIONS OF SWEET SILENT THOUGHT"
The subtly lyrical and exacting abstractions in this group show might summon up remembrance of things past—but these artists could just as easily be looking through an electron microscope. Gary Gissler's pencil drawings on gessoed panels look like magnetized dust; Teo González's grids of watery dots suggest regimented paramecia. Other entries include David Brody's proliferating geometrical wall drawing and works on paper by Morgan O'Hara, graphite scrawls inspired by live performances by the avant-jazz guru Anthony Braxton. Through April 26. (Bronx River Art Center, 1087 E. Tremont Ave. 718-589-5819.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

MEL BOCHNER
Minimalist photography of grids, drawings on graph paper, and sculptures made from wooden blocks may not be everyone's cup of tea, but these rarely seen pictures from the late sixties are surprisingly lighthearted. Like many others of his generation, Bochner set out to use photography to record the studies of space and distance for which he is famous, but his intentions failed, and the photographs have an inescapable artistry of their own. His self-portraits from 1968, "Actual Size (Face)" and "Actual Size (Hand)," are so coolly absurd that they lift conceptual photography from the doldrums of academic rigor. Through May 3. (Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 212-627-1018.)

LYNN DAVIS
Never shy about tackling extremely large subjects with her camera—Greenland's icebergs, Egypt's pyramids, the Hoover Dam—Davis has turned her roving eye to China. A series of the doomed Three Gorges on the Yangtze River is uncharacteristically moody, but pictures of steps leading to a cemetery, on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China, are vintage Davis: stark, austere, and toned to perfection with sepia, selenium, or gold. The prints themselves are overwhelmingly large, and, while the Buddhas, pagodas, ruins, and skyscrapers recall her earlier work, they're so beautiful you may want to jump on the next plane out. Through May 3. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.)

WILLIAM KLEIN
Klein's pictures of Tokyo were all taken in 1961, during modern Japan's period of adolescence between the war and the economic boom. Unlike, say, Shoji Ueda, whose often unsettling portraits of nineteen-sixties Japan suggest shadowy confusion, Klein focusses on the city's residents who bristle with industry, purpose, and confidence. In "Monkey Bars," kids clamber energetically over an enormous jungle gym, and the picture's lone adult, a beleaguered snack vender, morosely tends his wares in the foreground. Easy insouciance also informs "Bowing Ceremony," in which a dozen women, some in Western dress and some in kimonos, greet one another in a manicured park, laughing and chatting. Klein's photographs capture the personalities and public lives of the cities he documents, and his Tokyo certainly doesn't seem to be a city in the midst of an identity crisis; one suspects its residents haven't got the time for one. Through May 3. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 212-431-0292.)

"ART PHOTOGRAPHY IN JAPAN"
A selection of photography from the nineteen-twenties and thirties in which all things Western—especially art and design—were the rage. Accordingly, many of the pictures here—watery gray landscapes and quiet streets, most taken by anonymous artists—feel somewhat unspecific and unfamiliar, quite different from the sort of vivid, harsh street scenes for which Japanese photographers were later renowned. There are some remarkable images on display, the best of which, a 1925 shot of a theatre marquee announcing the arrival of Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights," is a beautiful play of shadows and light against a deep, grainy night. Through May 3. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 212-334-0010.)

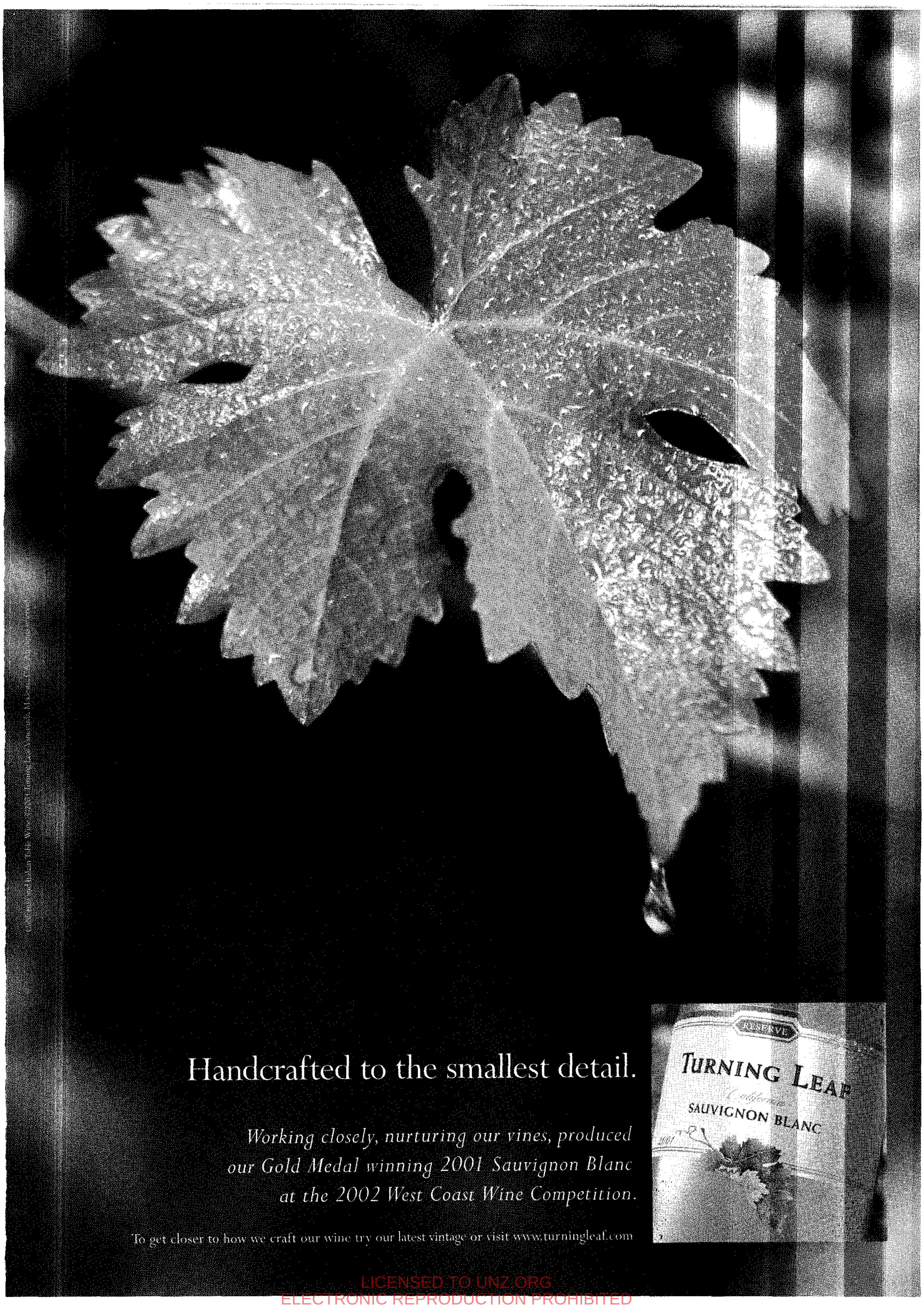
Short List

VERA LEUTER
Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.
Through May 3.

RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD
Pace/MacGill, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000.
Through April 26.

MIGUEL RIO BRANCO
Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 212-505-5555.
Through May 8.

"FLESH TONES"
Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.
Through April 19.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AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
April 23 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Photographs, including works by Adams, Bernhard, Edward Weston ("Charis, Santa Monica"), Drtikol, and many others. ♦ April 24 at 10:15 A.M.: "The Flower Girl in London," by Jules Bastien-Lepage (estimated to sell for approximately a million dollars), is the highlight of a sale of nineteenth-century European landscapes, portraits, and genre paintings. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
April 16 at 10 A.M. and 2: Jewelry. ♦ April 22 at 10 A.M. and 2: A broad selection of photographs from the nineteenth century to the present; works by Bellmer, Curtis (Volumes I to XVIII of "The North American Indian"), Penn, Sugimoto, and Paladini (his photomontage "Movement and Space," expected to bring up to fifteen thousand dollars) are among the highlights of the sale. ♦ April 23 at 10 A.M.: Nineteenth-century European art, including works from the French Barbizon and realist schools; Jules Breton's "Le Retour des Champs" (estimated to sell for approximately half a million dollars) is the highlight of the sale. ♦ April 24 at 10 A.M. and 2: Nineteenth-century sculpture, ceramics, and works of art. ♦ April 28 at 2: "Themes and Variations," a single-owner sale of some six hundred Picasso lithographs (of bulls, doves, women, and other obsessions), offered at a wide range of estimates. ♦ April 29 at 10 A.M. and 2: Property from the Seagram collection highlights a sale of prints from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that includes works by Matisse, Picasso, Dubuffet, Dine, Rivers, Marden, and Judd. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

PHILLIPS
The house returns for the spring season in its new downtown headquarters. April 24 at 7 and April 25 at 10 A.M.: A sale of photographs. ♦ April 25 at 7: The Seagram collection of photographs, a rich lode of mostly American works assembled for exhibit in the company's Third Avenue offices. Highlights of Part I of the sale include works by Eggleston, Winogrand, and Evans ("Main Street, Saratoga Springs, New York"). ♦ April 26 at 10 A.M. and 2: Parts II and III of the sale, featuring photographs by Siskind, Levitt, Weegee, Abbott, Kertész, and Bernhard and Hilla Becher ("Water Cooling Plant," from 1972), among others. (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)

DOYLE
April 29 at 10 A.M.: American furniture and decorations. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

WENDY ARMORY ANTIQUES SHOW
The firm presents its final show of the season, featuring a broad selection of art and antiques offered by more than eighty-five international dealers. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 212-472-1180. April 23-27.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"La Bohème," with Hei-Kyung Hong, Emily Pulley, Frank Lopardo, and Mariusz Kwiecien; Marcello Viotti conducts. (April 16 at 8.) ♦ With Angela Maria Blasi replacing Pulley. (April 19 and April 22 at 8 and April 26 at 1:30.) ♦ **"La Traviata,"** with Elena Kelessidi, Marcus Haddock, and Lado Ataneli; Viotti. (April 17 and April 21 at 8 and April 24 at 7:30.) ♦ With Andrea Rost replacing Kelessidi. (April 29 at 8.) ♦ Otto Schenk's relentlessly unimaginative 1991 production of **"Parsifal,"** long entrusted to James Levine, is now the territory of Valery Gergiev, a conductor who specializes more in sensation than in structure. The result? An exceedingly ponderous Act I, a second act that catches fire, and a finale of surpassing beauty. René Pape's mastery of vocal color and the rhythms of the German language imbues the role of the aged Gurnemanz with an almost youthful vigor; Plácido Domingo, still comfortable in heldentenor repertory, is an ardent, steady Parsifal; and Falk Struckmann's tensile baritone brings a neurotic intensity to the role of Amfortas. Also with Linda Watson (replacing Violeta Urmana as Kundry), Nikolai Putilin, and Eric Halfvarson. (April 18 at 6:30. This is the final performance.) ♦ Jonathan Miller's production of Stravinsky's **"The Rake's Progress,"** with Dawn Upshaw, Stephanie Blythe, Paul Groves, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine conducts. (April 19 at 1:30 and April 26 at 8.) ♦ With William Shimmell replacing Ramey. (April 23 at 8.) ♦ **"Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,"** with Solveig Kringelborn, Jill Grove, Johan Botha, Matthew Polenzani, James Morris (as Hans Sachs), Hans-Joachim Ketelsen, and René Pape; Levine. (April 25 and April 28 at 6.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

Jonathan Miller's production of "Così Fan Tutte" débuts at BAM's Harvey Theatre on April 24.

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Chas Rader-Shieber's new production of Handel's **"Flavio,"** with Jennifer Aylmer, Maria Zifchak, David Walker, and Bejun Mehta, among others; George Manahan conducts. (April 17 and April 23 at 7:30.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** with Angela Marambio, Adina Aaron, Gerard Powers, and Michael Corvino in the leading roles; Gerald Steichen. (April 18 at 8.) ♦ With Theresa Santiago, Julianne Borg, Barton Green, and Daniel Mobbs; Steven Osgood. (April 19 at 1:30 and April 26 at 8.) ♦ **"Carmen,"** with Elena Bocharova (in the title role), Angela Marambio, Carl Tanner, and Michael Chioldi; Joseph Rescigno. (April 19 at 8 and April 27 at 1:30.) ♦ The company closes its season with a new production of **"The Rape of Lucretia,"** Britten's tart and ironic tale of lust and honor in ancient Rome, directed by Christopher Alden. The mezzo-soprano Monica Groop leads

JOSÉ LUIS MERINO

a cast that includes Orla Boylan, Lauren Skuce, Myrna Paris, Michael Hendrick, Mel Ulrich, Andrew Schroeder, and Sanford Sylvan; Daniel Beckweth. (April 20 and April 26 at 1:30 and April 22 and April 24 at 7:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-307-4100.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK: "ATTILA"
Eve Queler conducts a concert performance of this early-Verdi crowd-pleaser, with Samuel Ramey (as the Hun himself), Lauren Flanigan, Francisco Casanova, and C. Y. Liao. (Carnegie Hall. 212-799-1982. April 23 at 8.)

BAM OPERA: "COSÌ FAN TUTTE"
"Così," the most intimate and emotionally complex of Mozart's operas, is the kind of piece that sprouts a thorn for every rose—perfect for the psychologically penetrating style of Jonathan Miller, who comes to Brooklyn to direct a new version of his 1995 production for Covent Garden. The cast includes Alexandra Deshorties, Rinat Shaham, Eric Cutler, Garry Magee, Helen Donath, and Thomas Allen; Robert Spano conducts the Brooklyn Philharmonic. (BAM Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. April 24, April 26, and April 28 at 7:30. Through May 4.)

DICAPO OPERA: "PASSION"
Mark Flint conducts the first New York revival of Stephen Sondheim's 1994 musical (with a libretto by James Lapine), one of his most romantic scores. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 212-288-9438. April 24-26 at 8 and April 27 at 4. Through May 4.)

TABLES FOR TWO

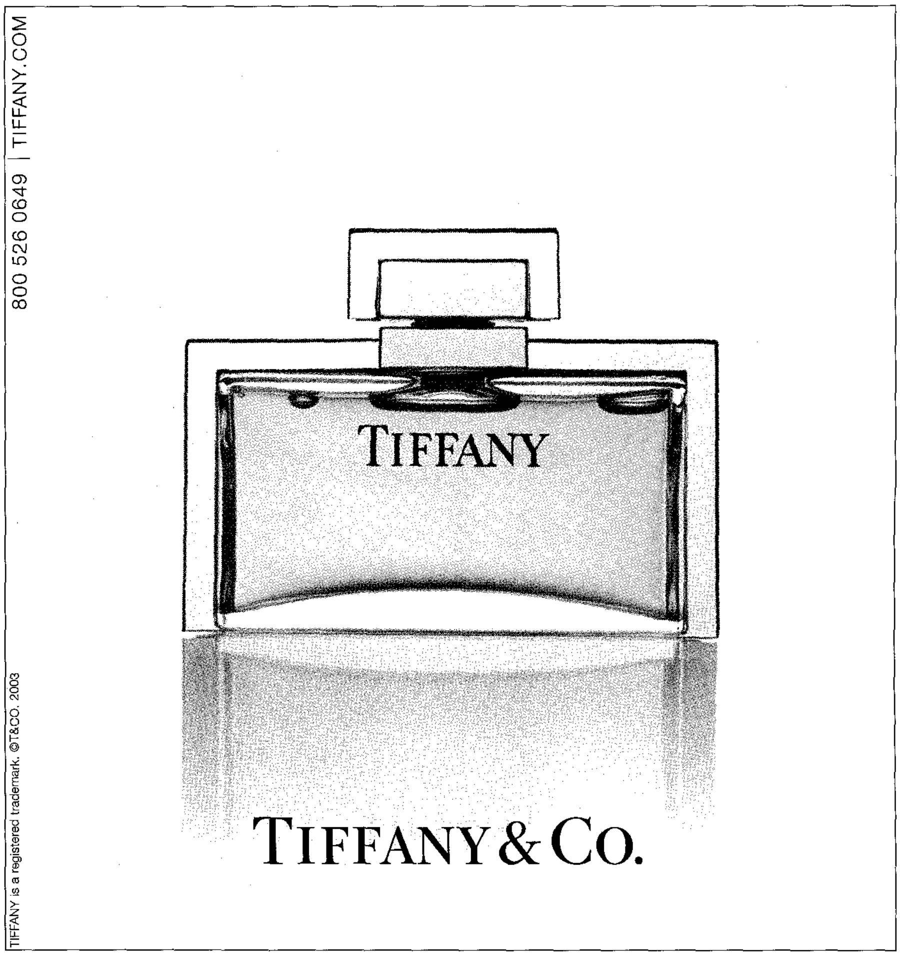
CAFÉ LEBOWITZ
14 Spring St. (212-219-2399)—It is often said that the bistro came into being in 1814, when Russian troops occupied Paris after Napoleon's failed campaign against Moscow. With no patience to wait for pâté to be put en croûte or for bevies of quail to be tucked under pastry coverlets with hothouse grapes, the invaders shouted "*Bystro!*" ("Quickly!") at French tavernkeepers, and, lo, steak-frites were born.

At Brian McNally's Café Lebowitz, at Elizabeth and Spring Streets in Nolita, the blended Franco-Russian heritage of the bistro is everywhere in evidence. Burgundy leather banquettes, dark wood tables, flickering sconces, and wide, smoky mirrors say France; cream-colored walls decorated with folkloric stencils and Constructivist prints and leaflets say Russia. The menu has been contrived to satisfy the most ravenous muzhik with simple fare prepared with finesse and invention.

The beet, the most beloved root vegetable of the Russian people, appears as a first course, served with grapefruit segments (a marvellous pairing); the roasted chicken comes with loops of sautéed leeks spaded into its center. Even the humblest item on the menu has unusual character: the hamburger arrives in a toasted brioche bun, alongside a steel cup of garlicky fries shaken with parsley, which have a butteriness that boosts the side dish to escargot calibre.

The food at Café Lebowitz may arrive *bystro*, but the high-spirited, talky clientele eats *medlenno* (slowly), basking in the conviviality of their surroundings and in the satisfactions of their dinner. Until this month, these included tobacco. McNally named his restaurant after his friend Fran Lebowitz, the writer and ardent smoker, but now their "Café Lebowitz"-stamped Zippos must be retired. "I think it's madness," McNally says. "All the staff here smoke." And so do most of the habitués. "Clearly, if this were the will of the people, the smoking would go on." (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $9-$17.)

—Liesl Schillinger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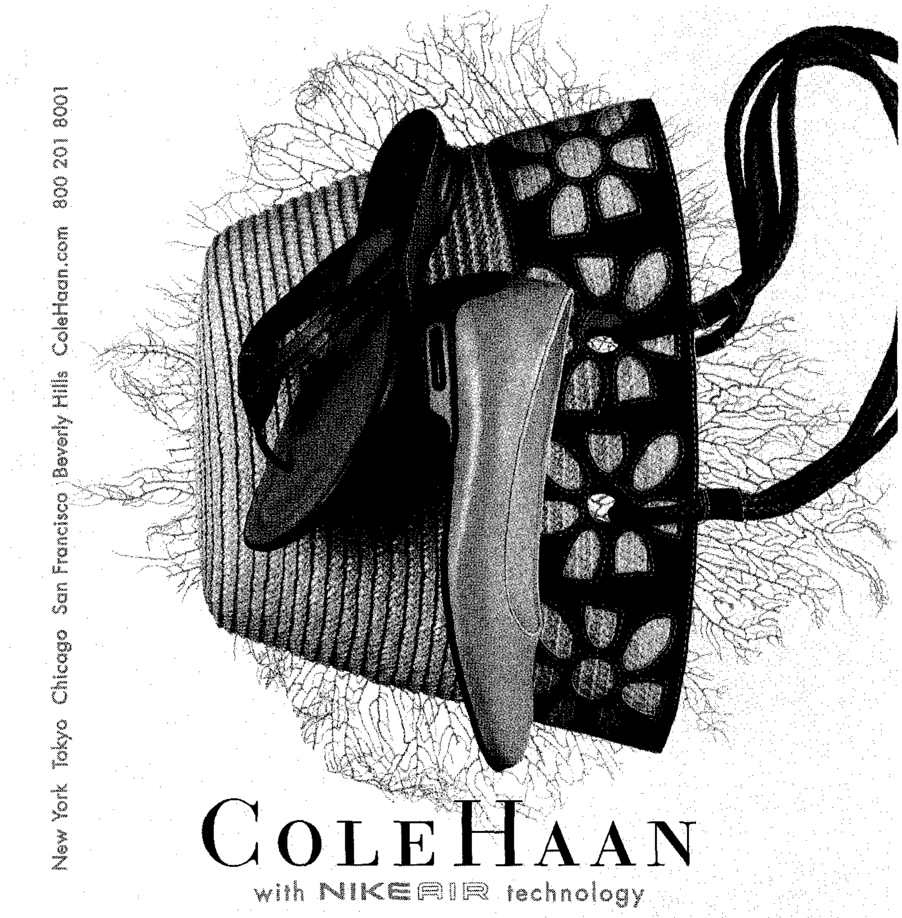
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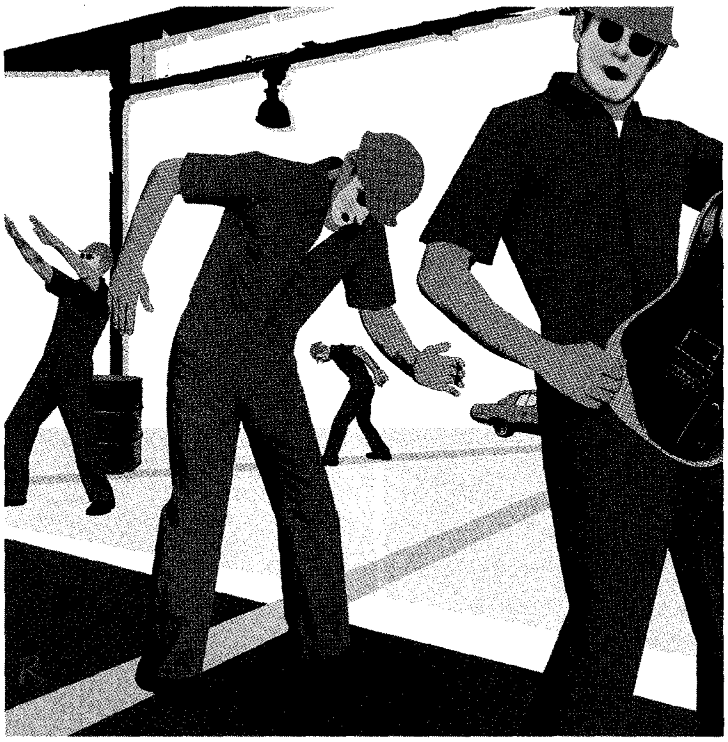
ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Kurt Masur, returning to his former gig in the first of three weeks of concerts, shares the podium with the composer-conductor André Previn, who will lead the New York première of his Violin Concerto (featuring his wife, Anne-Sophie Mutter); Masur conducts music by Brahms (the "Haydn Variations") and Dvořák (the Eighth Symphony). (April 24 and April 29 at 7:30, April 25 at 11 A.M., and April 26 at 8.) ♦ Masur returns to conduct the Dvořák in a Saturday-matinée concert that also includes chamber music by Ravel and Bartók (the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, featuring the Philharmonic's principal percussionist, Christopher Lamb). (April 26 at 2.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)



Devo, one of the groups in MOMA's music-video retrospective.

JOHN RITTER

GABRIELI CONSORT AND PLAYERS
Paul McCreesh's formidable period-instrument ensemble comes to New York for an Eastertide Bach residency, timed with the release of the group's recording of the St. Matthew Passion (see Classical Notes). April 18 at 8: The St. John Passion, with the singers Deborah York, Susan Bickley, James Gilchrist, and Peter Harvey performing all of the work's solo and choral parts. (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ April 20 at 4: The soprano Julia Gooding joins the ensemble in a performance of the Magnificat and the "Easter Oratorio." (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St.) (For tickets to both concerts, call 212-721-6500.)

ORPHEUS
Emanuel Ax is the guest artist with the conductorless chamber orchestra in a program of Mendelssohn, Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor), and Brahms. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 22 at 8.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S
Donald Runnicles conducts music by Wagner, Bruch (the Violin Concerto No. 1, with Joshua Bell), and Beethoven. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 24 at 8.)

EOS ORCHESTRA
The composer, pianist, and minimalist guru Michael Nyman leads the ensemble from the keyboard in a selection of his works, including the world première of "Manhatta," a score written to accompany a 1929 film by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler that will be shown in synch with the music. (Concert Hall, Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 212-691-6415. April 24-25 at 8.)

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHORUS OF NEW YORK CITY: "TRANSIENT GLORY"
This series of new-music programs (conducted by the group's director, Francisco J. Núñez) is becoming something of an institution. The group's third annual concert offers a bevy of world premières by such composers as Dominick Argento, David Del Tredici, and Michael Nyman. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. April 27 at 3.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Wolfgang Sawallisch leads his sumptuous ensemble in symphonies by Beethoven (the "Pastoral") and Schumann. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 29 at 8.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC
April 17-18 at 7:30: The violinist Mark Peskanov, the cellist Denise Djokic, and the pianist David Jalbert offer a concert of Corigliano, Rzewski (the "North American Ballads"), Barber, and Shostakovich (the Piano Trio No. 2 in E Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. For a complete listing of concerts, see www.bargemusic.org.)

MILLER THEATRE
April 22 at 8: The pianists Marilyn Nonken and Stephen Gosling join Ensemble 21 and its conductor, Jeffrey Milarsky, to perform the chamber version of Charles Wuorinen's "Dante Trilogy," a sequence of works originally composed for Peter Martins and the New York City Ballet. ♦ April 24 at 8: Ethel, downtown's hottest foursome, concludes its series of concerts devoted to the string quartets of John Zorn and Julia Wolfe. The program, which features the respective composers' cult classics "Cat o' Nine Tails" and "Early That Summer," also includes world premières by David Lang and Evan Ziporyn. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799.)

BASIL TWIST'S "SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE"
The San Francisco puppeteer's setting of the ultra-Romantic masterpiece in a ten-thousand-gallon water tank, which made an aqua-balletic splash in 1999, returns as the very grand finale of Lincoln Center's Berlioz festival. (Clark Studio Theatre, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. April 24-27 and April 29 at 8 and April 26-27 at 2. Through May 4.)

MITSUKO UCHIDA
April 24 at 8: The luminous pianist joins with the soprano Christine Oelze and the violinist Mark Steinberg for instrumental works by Mozart and songs by Schubert and Berg. ♦ April 28 at 8: The violinist Thomas Zehetmair, a passionate and protean advocate for music new and old, and Uchida offer an evening of Schubert, Zimmermann, and Schoenberg. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

EVGENY KISSIN
The incandescent Russian pianist plays a recital of Schubert (the Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960), Liszt, and Schubert-Liszt (four transcriptions from "Schwanengesang" and "Die Schöne Müllerin"). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 28 at 7:30.)

ELIOT FISK AND PACO PEÑA
The doyen of classical guitar and the flamenco master offer an evening of solo literature (from both of their traditions) as well as duets by Mendelssohn, Scarlatti, and Bach. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. April 26 at 8.)

MUSIC BEFORE 1800 SERIES: MALA PUNICA
This Italian ensemble of voices and instruments, known for its theatrically provocative productions, closes the series' season with "Narcisso Speculando," an exotic program devoted to madrigals by Paolo da Firenze (1390-1425). (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. April 27 at 4.)

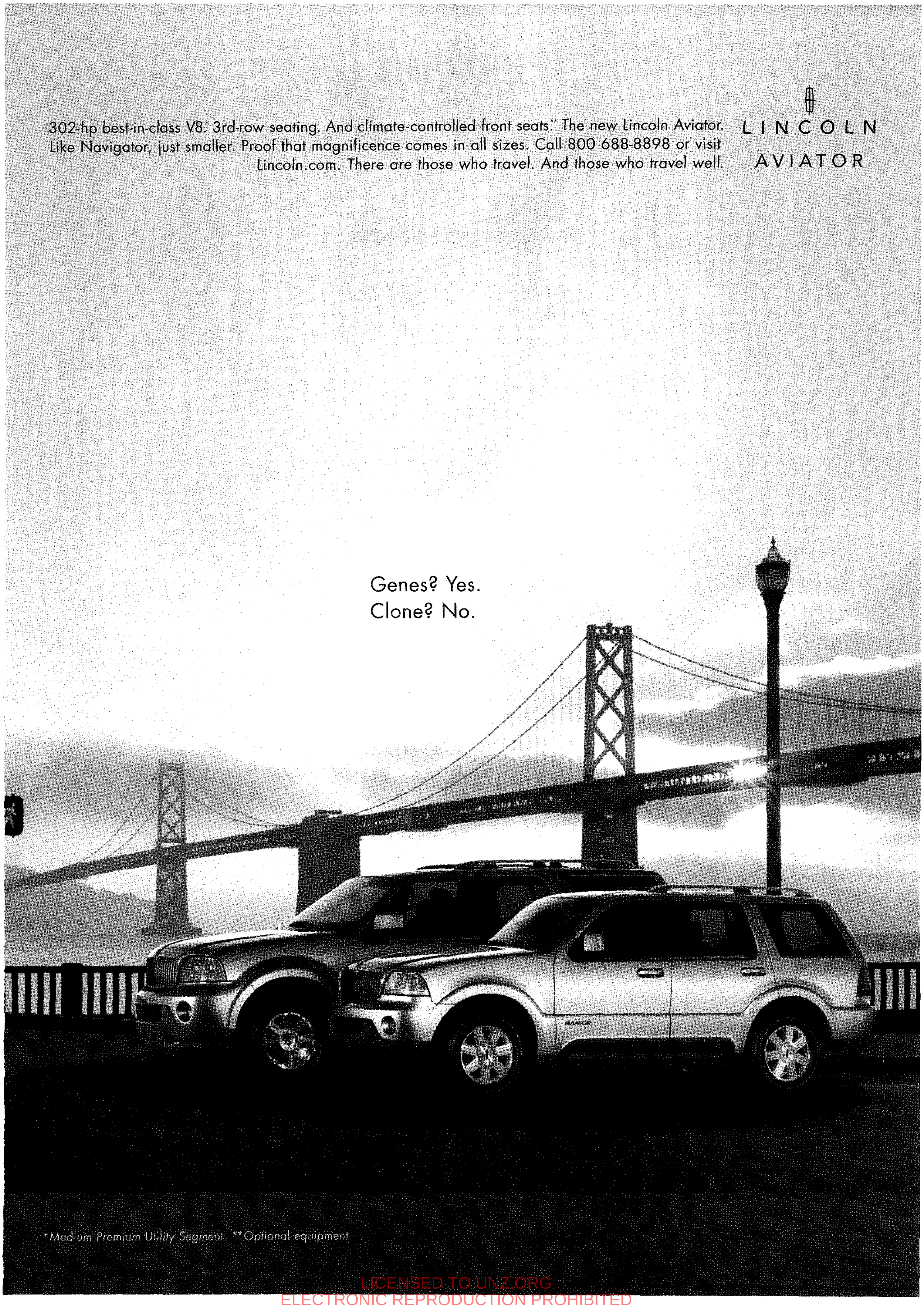
CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
The Orion String Quartet, joined by some good friends (including the pianist Peter Serkin), offers a program of Brahms (the Piano Quintet), Mendelssohn, and Mozart. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. April 27 at 5.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"GOLDEN OLDIES OF MUSIC VIDEO"
The Museum of Modern Art dedicates three consecutive Thursdays to the art form best known for controlling the minds of teenagers during the Reagan era. Yet even before the inception of MTV, in 1981, musicians were already hard at work creating visual counterparts for their songs: the museum's chronological survey starts in 1967, with two pieces by the Beatles, "Penny Lane" and "Strawberry Fields Forever." Highlights of the opening night include Queen's 1975 classic, "Bohemian Rhapsody," a raucous and disastrous homemade version of "Secret Agent Man" by Devo (who in 1976 were still getting their look together), and a three-minute animated treasure set to Elvis Costello's "Accidents Will Happen." The art-rock pioneer Laurie Anderson introduces the first presentation, on April 17, and Kim Gordon, of the band Sonic Youth, and the video artist Pipilotti Rist have the honor on April 24 and May 1, respectively. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 212-777-4900. Screenings at 8.)

READINGS
April 17 at 7: Jenny Davidson offers passages from her novel, "Heredity," and Douglas Goetsch reads from his poetry. (Pete's Candy Store, 709 Lorimer St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn 718-302-3770.) ♦ April 17 at 9: A group of writers, actors, translators, and scholars, including Frank McCourt, Harvey Keitel, and Jorie Graham, get together for a marathon reading of Dante's Inferno. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 212-662-2133.) ♦ April 19 at 8: Rachel Hadas, John Hollander, and other poets read their new translations of Horace's Odes. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.) ♦ April 23 at 7:30: John Ashbery, Anne Carson, Susan Sontag, and others read from and consider the influence of Gertrude Stein's work. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. For more information, call 212-334-1660, ext. 107.)

TALKS
April 24 at 7: André Aciman discusses the writings of Marcel Proust. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-355-6160.) ♦ April 27 at 2: The historian Susan Zuccotti talks about the life and work of Primo Levi. (Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza. For more information, call 718-230-2100.) ♦ April 29 at 7: Lawrence Ferlinghetti delivers the annual Frost lecture at the ninety-third Poetry Society of America awards ceremony. Marie Ponsot will provide the introduction. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call 212-254-9628.)



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MOVIES OPENING

BULLETPROOF MONK
An action picture with Chow Yun-Fat as a martial-arts master who comes to New York to find and train his successor. Also with Seann William Scott and Jaime King. Opening April 16.

CHASING PAPI
Three Latinas discover that they are dating the same guy (Eduardo Verástegui), in a comedy directed by Linda Mendoza. Opening April 16.

CITY OF GHOSTS
After an insurance scam falls apart, a con man (Matt Dillon) goes looking for his partner (James Caan) in Cambodia. With Stellan Skarsgard and Natascha McElhone; directed by Dillon. Opening April 25.

CONFIDENCE
Ed Burns plays a grifter who runs afoul of a dangerous underworld boss (Dustin Hoffman), in a heist drama directed by James Foley. With Rachel Weisz and Paul Giamatti. Opening April 25.

A DECADE UNDER THE INFLUENCE
Ted Demme and Richard LaGravenese directed this documentary about the films and filmmakers of the seventies, which includes interviews with Polly Platt, Francis Ford Coppola, Jack Nicholson, and others. Opening April 25.

HOLES
A family drama based on the book by Louis Sachar in which a young boy is sent off to Camp Green Lake, where the camp's director (Sigourney Weaver) asks the boys to dig holes all day for no apparent reason. Also with Jon Voight and Tim Blake Nelson. Opening April 18.

HOUSE OF FOOLS
Andrei Konchalovsky wrote and directed this drama about a group of patients in a mental hospital during the 1996 Chechen war. In Russian. Opening April 25.

IDENTITY
In James Mangold's new thriller, ten travellers become stranded in a desert motel, and a murderer is among them. The cast includes Amanda Peet, John Cusack, Alfred Molina, Clea DuVall, and Ray Liotta. Opening April 25.

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY
Kirk, Michael, and Cameron Douglas play members of a fractious New York clan, in a comedy directed by Fred Schepisi. Opening April 25.

JERSEY GUY
A drama directed and co-written by Elia Zois, in which the life of a twenty-five-year-old Garden State native becomes topsy-turvy after he meets a New York model. Opening April 25.

LILYA 4-EVER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening April 18.

LOVE AND DIANE
Jennifer Dworkin's documentary follows the life of Diane, a recovering crack addict and mother of six, and her daughter Love for a span of five years. Opening April 16. (Film Forum.)

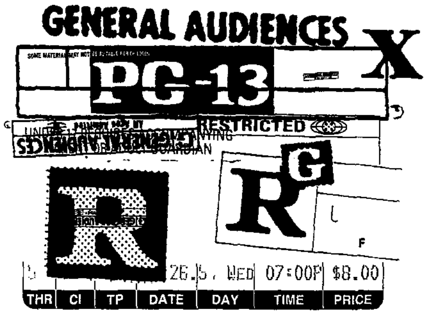
MALIBU'S MOST WANTED
The comedian Jamie Kennedy plays a white would-be rapper whose love of hip-hop is harming his father's political ambitions, in a comedy directed by John Whitesell. With Taye Diggs and Anthony Anderson. Opening April 18.

MAROONED IN IRAQ
In the Kurdish-Iranian director Bahman Ghobadi's new film, a musician searches for his ex-wife during the chaotic last days of the Iran-Iraq War. In Kurdish. Opening April 25.

A MIGHTY WIND
Christopher Guest co-wrote and directed this satirical comedy about the folk-music world. In addition to Guest, the cast includes Eugene Levy, Michael McKean, Jane Lynch, Parker Posey, and Harry Shearer. Opening April 16.

ONMYOJI
Yojiro Takita's martial-arts epic, based on the mythology of Abe-no-Seimei, the tenth-century Yin-Yang master. With Mansai Nomura, Hideaki Ito, and Hiroyuki Sanada. In Japanese. Opening April 18.

PEOPLE I KNOW
Al Pacino plays a cynical Gotham publicist who runs into trouble while hiding the mistress (Tea Leoni) of a political candidate (Ryan O'Neal). Also with Kim Basinger. Dan Algrant directed. Opening April 23.



WINGED MIGRATION
A documentary shot on all seven continents, about the migratory patterns of birds. Directed by Jacques Perrin. Opening April 18.

FILM NOTES

BASIC
It's time for John Travolta to make another comeback. His latest throwaway performance—as an ex-Army Ranger who investigates a combat mystery—seems as manufactured as his newly buffed-up body. Even worse, he's already made this film; last time, it was called "The General's Daughter." The screenplay, involving a missing squad of Marines, is an exhausting labyrinth, and John McTiernan ("Die Hard") directs with such a whirling frenzy, it's surprising that pieces of his camera aren't embedded in the film.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

CET AMOUR-LÀ
At the age of sixty-six, during a fallow period of her working life, the novelist, screenwriter, playwright, and director Marguerite Duras (Jeanne Moreau) takes as a lover a twenty-eight-year-old philosophy student and admirer, Yann Andréa (Aymeric Demarigny), who has been writing her fan letters for five years. As they live together, she dictates to him and drinks, and exercises the French art of making arbitrary declarations. "Bathtubs scare me," she says. But she might just as well have said, "Rattan furniture scares me." The only point of such remarks is that she exhibits the will to make them. As writer-director Josée Dayan imagines her, Duras is a dazzling intellectual star in the French diva-oracle tradition, and her continuous self-assertion is a miracle. But in this movie Duras comes off as a sibyl without vision. And poor Andréa comes off as a nothing. He is not an intellectual companion, and Duras does not look at his naked body with desire. If you're going to make a movie about sado-masochism, you had better make it funny or dirty. But "Cet Amour-Là" is watery and sentimental and (perhaps unconsciously) cruel. In French.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 4/14/03.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

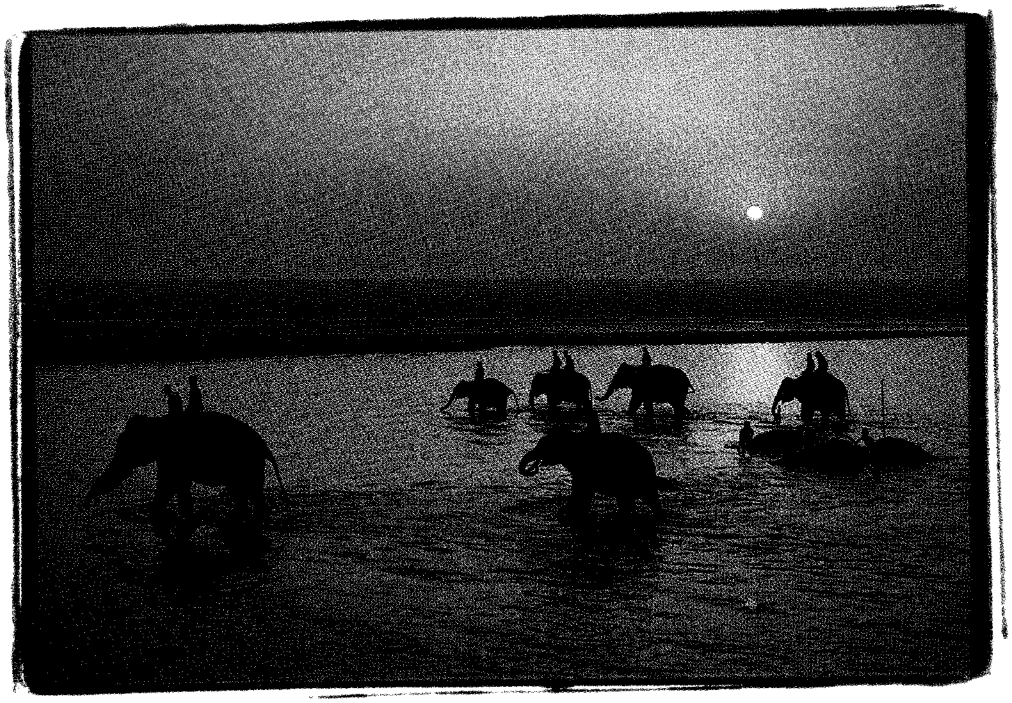
CITY OF GOD
Just how far into your face can a movie get? This one has every intention of leaving you scalded and bruised. Set in Rio de Janeiro, it was directed by Fernando Meirelles, who tries every trick known to cameramen: freeze frames, whip pans, multiple dissolves, slow motion, double motion, any kind of motion. The object is to keep pace with his characters, the young and dispossessed of the Brazilian slums. The movie hastens roughly from the nineteen-sixties to the eighties, as we watch the boys either die or grow old before their time. The result is a jolting ride, but such is the skill on show that we run the risk of being too exhilarated to notice every death; does the film convince in its plea for the forgotten poor, or are we encouraged to forget them as they fall? In Portuguese.—*Anthony Lane* (1/20/03) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

COOL HAND LUKE
Slick, crude, yet somehow a pop classic. Stuart Rosenberg's direction emphatically nails down every corner of the alienated-Christ allegory embedded in this 1967 Southern chain-gang saga, written by Frank R. Pierson and Donn Pearce from Pearce's novel. But Rosenberg deserves credit for gathering some landmark performances, notably from Strother Martin as the quietly menacing, country-shrewd prison-camp captain who says, "What we have here is failure to communicate," and, of course, from Paul Newman in the title role of the decorated Second World War veteran and peacetime ne'er-do-well who can't conform to save his life. Newman's contained charisma and paradoxical modesty are perfect for the role of a natural martyr rebel, and George Kennedy, in an Oscar-winning supporting turn, is an ideal foil as an effusive inmate leader. Conrad Hall did the atmospheric, sometimes zoom-happy cinematography, and the remarkable cast includes J. D. Cannon, Robert Drivas, Luke Askew, Harry Dean Stanton, Dennis Hopper, Joe Don Baker, Ralph Waite, Anthony Zerbe, Wayne Rogers, Clifton James, Lou Antonio, and Jo Van Fleet.—*Michael Sragow* (BAM Rose Cinemas; April 29.)

DREAMCATCHER
This big-budget horror film, based on a novel by Stephen King and directed by Lawrence Kasdan, features a lot of pretty New England snow and four male friends (Thomas Jane, Jason Lee, Damian Lewis, and Timothy Olyphant) held together by a special past. But, in the end, it's an abominable-worm picture. About three feet long, tubular, and slithering, the creature enters people's bodies somehow or other and then tears through their guts. All in all, it's not an unimpressive worm, but we've seen it before. As for the plot, it seems that alien creatures have landed, and an American military force, led by a mad colonel (Morgan Freeman), is out to quarantine the area and destroy the humans who have been infected. Or something like that. Incoherent and repulsive, "Dreamcatcher" is a repetitive procession of arbitrary scares and thrills without a unifying visual or poetic idea. The veteran William Goldman wrote the screenplay with Kasdan.—*D.D.* (3/31/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

FELLINI: I'M A BORN LIAR
In this superb documentary fantasia, Fellini is seen directing an erotic scene from "Fellini Satyricon," shaping the performances of three beautiful young people with his hands, caressing the air as he croons instructions to first one and then another. His control of the scene is remarkable, but it makes one laugh, too, because in so much of the surrounding interview material, the director describes himself as a kind of medium through which a given movie passes, a mere craftsman in the service of reverie. His actual practice, as we can see from the many scenes of him at work, is consciously to shape every breath of air in his films, to dominate, terrify, seduce, and to dream and suffer for everyone. This Franco-Italian-Scottish co-production, directed by Damian Pettigrew, is an extraordinary piece of film in its own right. Pettigrew and his collaborators surround the interview material with a texture of film excerpts and freshly shot footage that has the density of one of the maestro's own movies, without the excess. In English and Italian.—*D.D.* (4/14/03) (Film Forum.)

THE GOOD THIEF
Nick Nolte plays Bob, half French, half American, whose days—and, more spectacularly, his nights—are spent in Nice. He is a chronic gambler and a heroin addict. He also used to be a thief, and Neil Jordan's movie shows him circling back to his old ways, as a sumptuous collection of paintings lures him into action—Bob is a bear, and his honey is fine art. With him are a bunch of henchmen, notably the smooth Raoul (Gérard Darmon); against him is a local detective (Tchéky Karyo), although the two of them are old, if not trusted, friends. The movie comes alive in the hero's presence: the camera frame is crammed with Nolte's shambling bulk, and we watch the wasting of his powers and his lunges at respectability. As a heist movie, however, this is a dud, the plot splintering badly in the middle. With Nolte to rely on, why does Jordan allow his attention to be distracted by lesser



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figures? Happily, the finale is a smooth run, as Bob and a young companion (Nutsa Kukhianidze) make hay at the tables of a casino. The material is heavily adapted from Jean-Pierre Melville's "Bob le Flambeur," with some patches of dialogue preserved intact.—*A.L.* (4/7/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema 1, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

HEAD OF STATE

Chris Rock will make a great movie someday, but this lame comedy, which he directed and co-wrote, is as stale as yesterday's malt liquor. The promising setup has Rock as a Washington, D.C., alderman who's tapped to run for President so that he'll lose, paving the way for another candidate. The film could have been an all-out satiric barrage like "Hollywood Shuffle" or a culturally acute comedy like "Barbershop." Instead, it's one tepid racial joke after another, interspersed with Rock's cringe-inducing sermonizing about the plight of the inner city. The film is almost saved by the support of Bernie Mac, who cuts a swath through the talk-show circuit as a menacing, defensive bail bondsman and Vice-Presidential candidate.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE HUNTED

There's trouble in the Pacific Northwest: Benicio Del Toro is in the woods, protecting the deer. A former U.S. Army assassin, he's been trained in wilderness tracking and hand-to-hand combat, but a tour of duty in Bosnia sent him over the edge. This is bad news for the master tracker L. T. Bonham (Tommy Lee Jones), happily retired to British Columbia. After Del Toro takes out two hunters, the F.B.I. picks up Jones in a helicopter and charges him with bringing in his former protégé. This manly movie belongs to the veteran director William Friedkin, who seems to have lost any idea of how to show the art of tracking onscreen. By the evidence presented here, it seems to mean smelling your fingers, staring into tree branches, and walking oddly, as though you'd pulled a muscle.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Theatre.)

IRREVERSIBLE

A thoroughly nasty piece of work, though not an empty or a foolish one: the director, Gaspar Noé, gives every sign of careful cleverness. His film tells of a young couple (Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel) who make love, go to a Paris party, and leave separately. She is raped and beaten; he pursues the assailant and takes what he believes to be revenge. The whole story runs backward, beginning with death and violation and rewinding to a nice afternoon, a bright white screen, and the joyful strains of Beethoven. The irony is pure acid: any pleasure that we meet later in the film is spoiled and scarred by the events of the first half, which are not so much irreversible as unwatchable. The trouble is that the picture has fallen victim to its own reputation; from here on, despite the seriousness of Noé's intentions, he will be known as the Man Who Showed Too Much. In French.—*A.L.* (3/10/03) (Angelika Film Center.)

LAUREL CANYON

After the solemnities of "High Art," the director Lisa Cholodenko has turned to lighter matters: specifically, what to do if your mother is an unreconstructed hippie. Sam (Christian Bale) takes his fiancée, Alex (Kate Beckinsale), home to California to meet his mom, Jane (Frances McDormand), a record producer whose walls of photographs bear testament to a life misspent in rock. She is all the family that Sam has but far more than he wants, especially since Jane's idea of quality time is to come within an inch of seducing her son's girlfriend while bringing a shameless young rock star (Alessandro Nivola) along for the ride. The movie has poise and a lightly perspiring sexiness, but also an uncertain sense of humor, and you end up rooting for the squares—especially Sam and his colleague Sara (Natascha McElhone), who have more fun in the front of a Volvo than seems either practical or legal. The soundtrack is full of ersatz British pop, so tuneless and squally that it could almost be the real thing.—*A.L.* (3/10/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

LEVITY

Anything but. Ed Solomon's dreary début film about alienation and redemption stars Billy Bob Thornton (in a Jesus wig) as an ex-con revisiting the scene of his crime. He's befriended by a group of sad sacks (Morgan Freeman, Holly Hunter, and Kirsten Dunst, among others) and responds with endless bouts of haunted introspection.—*B.D.* (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

A MAN APART

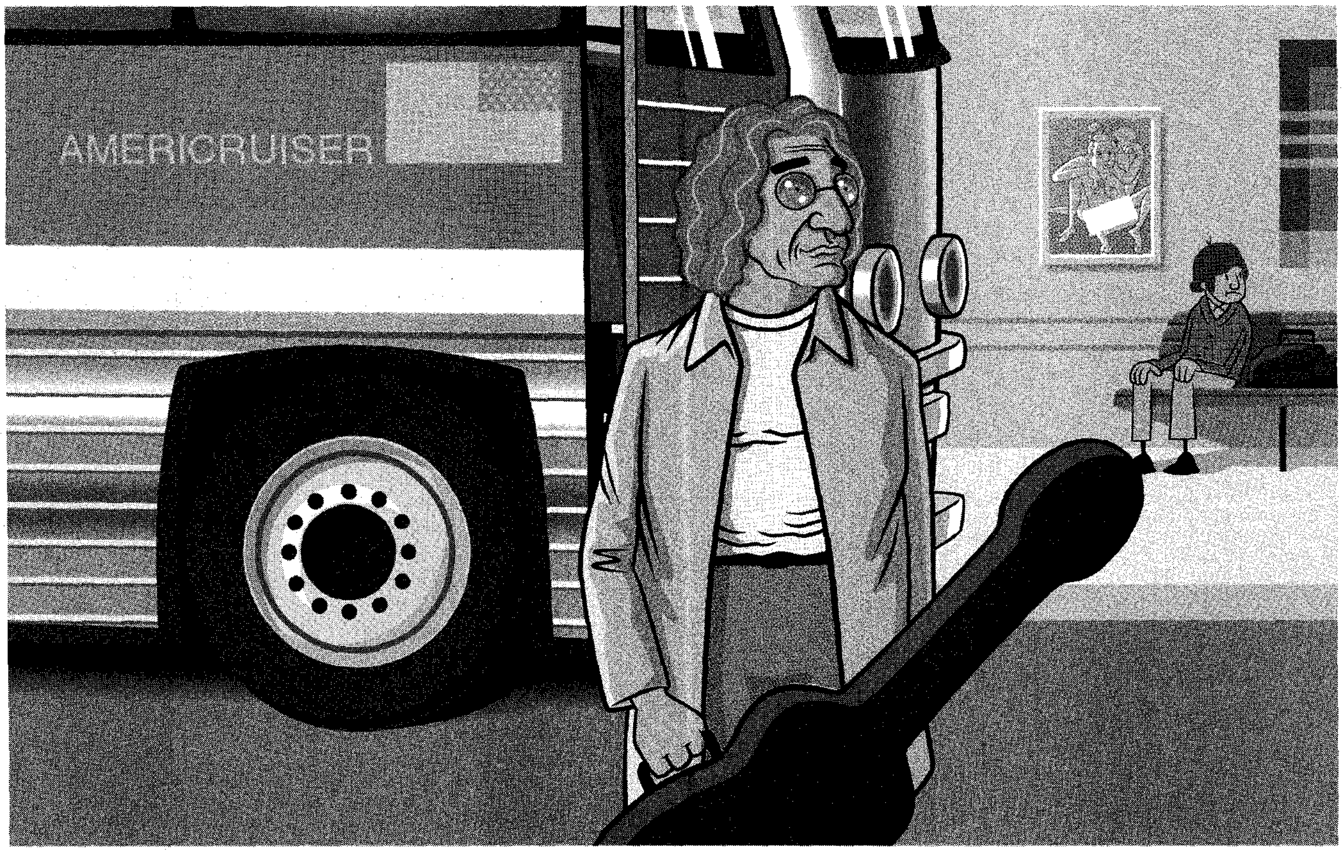
Yet another Vin Diesel vehicle running on fumes. This time he's playing a D.E.A. agent out to bring down a Mexican drug lord. The director F. Gary Gray's uninspired camerawork, glossy and shamelessly derivative, is pure hell. And Diesel, who once showed some promise as an actor (yes, an actor) continues to retool himself as a bruising action star, but, weirdly, his lumbering body and lisping line readings come off as astonishingly passive.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE MAN WITHOUT A PAST

A huge Finn (Markku Peltola), unnamed and undemonstrative, is beaten up and left for dead. Knowing almost nothing of his former life, he begins a new one—living in a converted storage container on the Helsinki waterfront, befriending a dog, and cooking regrettable meals for a quiet blonde (Kati Outinen) from the Salvation Army. The director is Aki Kaurismäki, and even by his rigorous standards this is laconic fare—long, peaceful silences broken by tentative conversation and the steady puff of cigarettes. The result is oddly affecting: you come to feel not just sympathy for the hero, with his bandaged brow and utter want of self-pity, but even a mild envy for his uncluttered existence. In Finnish.—*A.L.* (4/7/03) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

PHONE BOOTH

Colin Farrell, with an impressive Bronx accent, as a slick P.R. agent trapped on the phone with a sharpshooting psycho. After the audience gets past the nostalgia of seeing a Bell Atlantic phone booth on a New York street (which was filmed mostly in L.A., of course), the punchy eighty-minute script by the low-budget horror master Larry Cohen and the energetic direction of Joel Schumacher make for



Eugene Levy plays a folksinger in "A Mighty Wind," a comedy he co-wrote with Christopher Guest, who directed and also stars.

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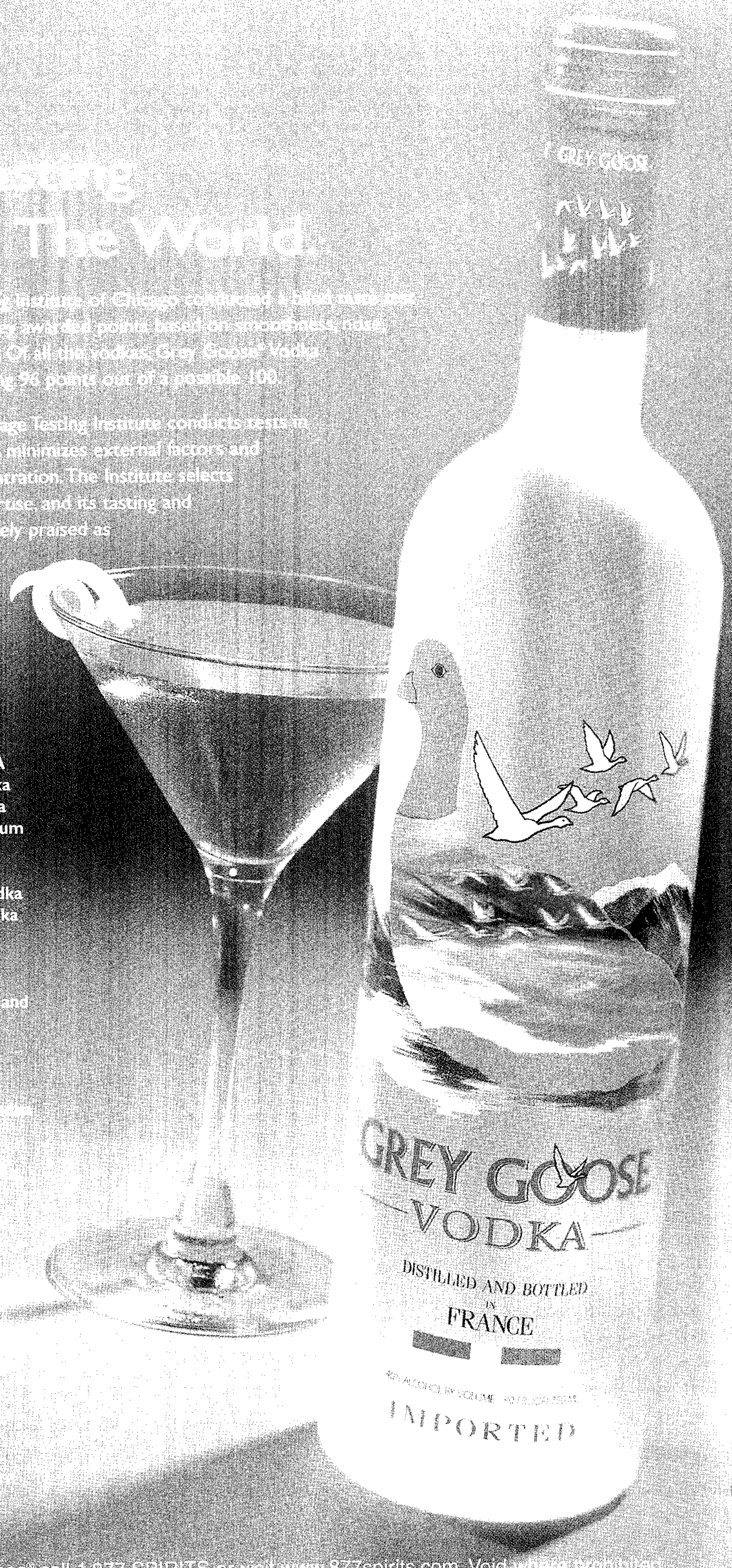

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88	Wyborowa Vodka
87	Kremlyovskaya Vodka
86	Finlandia Vodka of Finland
86	Alps French Vodka
85	Skyy Vodka
82	Original Polish Vodka
82	Glenmore Special
82	Fleischmann's Royal Vodka
81	Mr. Boston Vodka
80	Pole Star Vodka
80	Luksusowa Polish [illegible]
80	Absolut Vodka
78	Cardinal Vodka
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74	Belvedere
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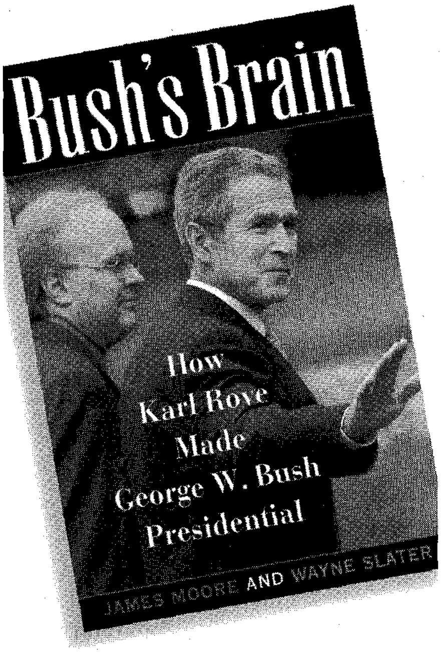
Bush's Brain
How Karl Rove Made George W. Bush Presidential
James Moore and Wayne Slater

"If you want to understand the president's underlying motives, read the new book on his guru, Karl Rove, *Bush's Brain.*"

—Al Hunt,
The Wall Street Journal

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some entertaining nonsense. Farrell is a joy to watch; he delivers his dialogue with a screwed-up energy that seduces everyone in sight.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE PIANIST
Roman Polanski's drama about the survival of a real-life Polish Jew, the pianist Wladyslav Szpilman (Adrien Brody), during the grim days of the Holocaust is a movie that has been perfectly produced. The sense of scale and detail is exact, and the violence is neither exaggerated nor minimized but presented with clear-eyed accuracy. Yet this is not a work of great originality or imagination. Its protagonist lacks depth, and the theme of survival through hiding is, by its very nature, redundant. The playwright Ronald Harwood adapted the 1946 book that Szpilman wrote about his experiences without attempting to open up the hero at all. Is he ashamed, defiant, guilty? Grateful for his luck? We haven't a clue. His survival is an anomaly, a mistake, a joke—and that may be why the story appealed to Polanski. Shot largely in Warsaw.—*D.D.* (1/13/03) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

RAISING VICTOR VARGAS
A lovely small-scale comedy about the commonplace mating rituals in a Dominican section of Manhattan. It's summer, and everyone is on the prowl, but the neighborhood is friendly and peaceful; chickens run through the alleys, and small gardens pop up here and there among the projects. The boys act cocky even when they're unsure of themselves, and the girls pretend they don't need boys. Nothing very important happens, but, moment by moment, the movie is alive with the play of gestures and glances, the faces of aggression and withdrawal. Victor Rasuk is well cast as the good-looking local Casanova, perhaps eighteen years old, and Judy Marte is the wary young beauty who gets him to change his style. The writer-director Peter Sollett stays close to the actors, all nonprofessionals, and they greet the camera with a modest but exploratory willingness.—*D.D.* (3/31/03) (Chelsea Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, Empire 25, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE RECKLESS MOMENT
A responsible mother (Joan Bennett), trying to be the man of the house while her husband is overseas, takes extreme measures to protect her daughter (Geraldine Brooks) from being connected to the accidental death of the girl's sleazy lover (Shepperd Strudwick). Max Ophuls (credited as Opuls), shooting on location in Los Angeles and in a quaint seaside town fifty miles away, fleshes out this unusual 1949 domestic film noir with a sort of heightened quotidian detail—as Ophuls's camera glides through the woman's house, you feel you know it better than you do your own. And James Mason is essential in the nonsensical role of a sensitive, caring blackmailer. He helps Ophuls spin the soap-opera elements of the story into wonderfully ironic romantic melodrama: a suburban fairy tale in which a dark knight helps the heroine slay her dragons, but one in which no one looks as if he or she will live happily ever after. Remade in 2001 as "The Deep End."—*M.S.* (Moving Image; April 20.)

SHADOWS
John Cassavetes' favorite Cassavetes movie, and his first. Under the influence of New York acting classes and jazz, he invented a jumpy, hip, tormented form of improvisational filmmaking. Hugh Hurd plays a bluesy musician who stoops to introducing a frowzy chorus line in a Philadelphia dive; Ben Carruthers is Hugh's kid brother, a post-adolescent loafer; Lelia Goldoni is their sister, a romantic loser who thinks life is eluding her. (The characters take the first names of the actors.) The three siblings are black, but Ben and Lelia can pass for white. Cassavetes' casualness about racial identities intensifies the moments when race erupts as an issue. This 1960 film's tragicomic centerpiece is Goldoni's extraordinary embodiment of passionate confusion. But her co-stars are memorable, too: Hurd gives doggedness a good name, and Rupert Crosse is wonderful as his agent-manager. The title refers to Ben and Lelia's racial conundrum, and to both characters' living in the shadows of people they hope or fear they might become.—*M.S.* (Thalia Theatre; April 26-27.)

SPIRITED AWAY
The animator-director Hayao Miyazaki came out of retirement to complete this movie; it's an amazing work, filled with a visual intelligence that's meticulously composed and almost obscenely clever. Miyazaki's playful aesthetic is like a Japanese word that can't be adequately translated—part Spielberg, part Dr. Seuss. American audiences may be put off at first by a film that is essentially a cartoon about a fearful ten-year-old girl. But as the hero, Chihiro, sees her parents turned into swine and flees into an alternate world filled with the creatures of Japanese mythology and of Miyazaki's own invention, any distracting sense of childishness falls away. Left to savor are virtuoso touches, like a flock of birds that becomes useless paper, a train that glides along the surface of a lake, and one of the great villains of all time, Yubaba, who looks like a bobble-headed grandmother on speed.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

THE YOUNG UNKNOWNS
A day in the life of trust-fund Hollywood twentysomethings, richly done. The actors who play the drifting wanna-bes (Devon Gummersall and Leslie Bibb, among others) breathe a casual and sexy dysfunctional allure into their performances. As the characters' drug-and-vodka-fuelled lives careen out of control, Catherine Jelski's measured and very in-control direction (she also wrote the script) imbues the confusion with a dreamy aimlessness.—*B.D.* (Cinema Village.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANGER MANAGEMENT
Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

BETTER LUCK TOMORROW
Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Empire 25.

COWBOY BEBOP: THE MOVIE
Angelika Film Center and 42nd Street E Walk.

XX/XY
Sunshine Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).

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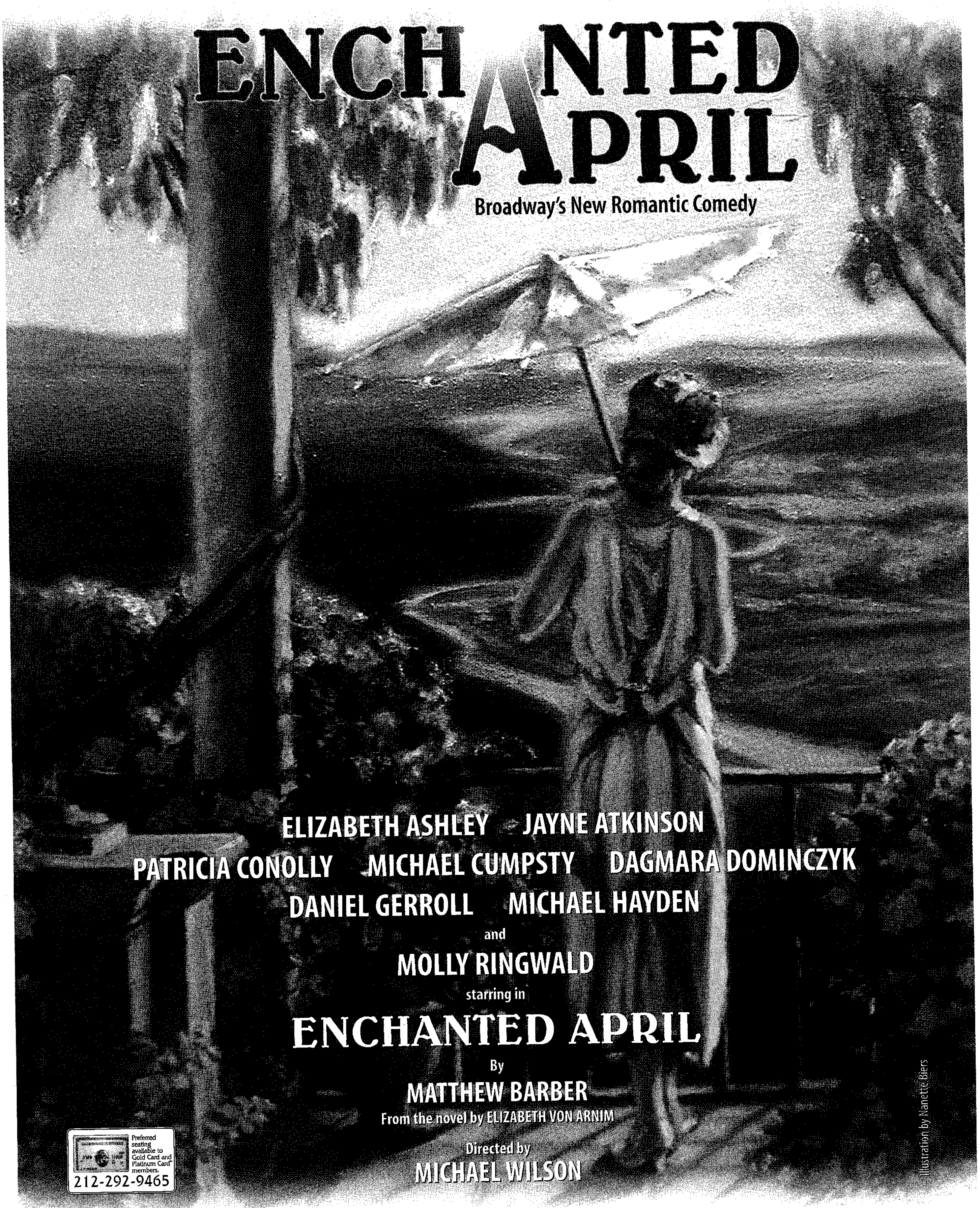

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Opening April 18, at the Paris, Jacques Perrin's documentary "Winged Migration."

TOMER HANUKA

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through May 11: "Home and Away," pairings of an international film and an American film by the same director. April 19 at 2: "Toni" (1935, Jean Renoir; in French). ♦ April 19 at 4: "The Southerner" (1945, Renoir). ♦ April 20 at 2: "Liebelei" (1932, Max Ophuls; in German). ♦ April 20 at 4: "The Reckless Moment" (†). ♦ April 26 at 2: "Blowup" (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni). ♦ April 26 at 4:15: "Zabriskie Point" (1970, Antonioni). ♦ A memorial tribute to Stan Brakhage. April 27 at 2. ♦ Repertory nights. April 19-20 at 6:30: "The Conformist" (1971, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian). ♦ April 26-27 at 6:30: "The Marquise of O" (1976, Eric Rohmer; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—French women filmmakers. April 17 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Venus Beauty Institute" (1998, Tonie Marshall). ♦ April 18 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "For Sale" (1998, Laetitia Masson). ♦ April 19 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Brief Crossing" (2001, Catherine Breillat). ♦ April 20 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "A Hell of a Day" (2001, Marion Vernoux). ♦ April 22 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Will It Snow for Christmas?" (1996, Sandrine Veysset). ♦ April 23 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Beau Travail" (1998, Claire Denis). ♦ April 24 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Coming to Terms with the Dead" (1994, Pascale Ferran). ♦ April 25 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Diary of a Seducer" (1995, Danièle Dubroux). ♦ April 26 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "The Taste of Others" (2000, Agnès Jaoui). ♦ April 27 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "La Répétition" (2000, Catherine Corsini). ♦ Mario Bava films. April 21 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Kill, Baby . . . Kill!" (1966; in Italian). ♦ April 28 at 7:20 and 9:30: "Twitch of the Death Nerve" (1971; in Italian). ♦ A tribute to the cinematographer Conrad Hall. April 29 at 4, 7, and 9:30: "Cool Hand Luke" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—April 16-24 at 1, 3:10, 5:30, 7:40, and 9:50: "Muhammad Ali, the Greatest" (1974, William Klein; in French). ♦ Starting April 25: Matthew Barney's "Cremaster" films. April 25-28 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Cremaster 1" (1995) and "Cremaster 2" (1999). ♦ April 29 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "Cremaster 3" (2002).

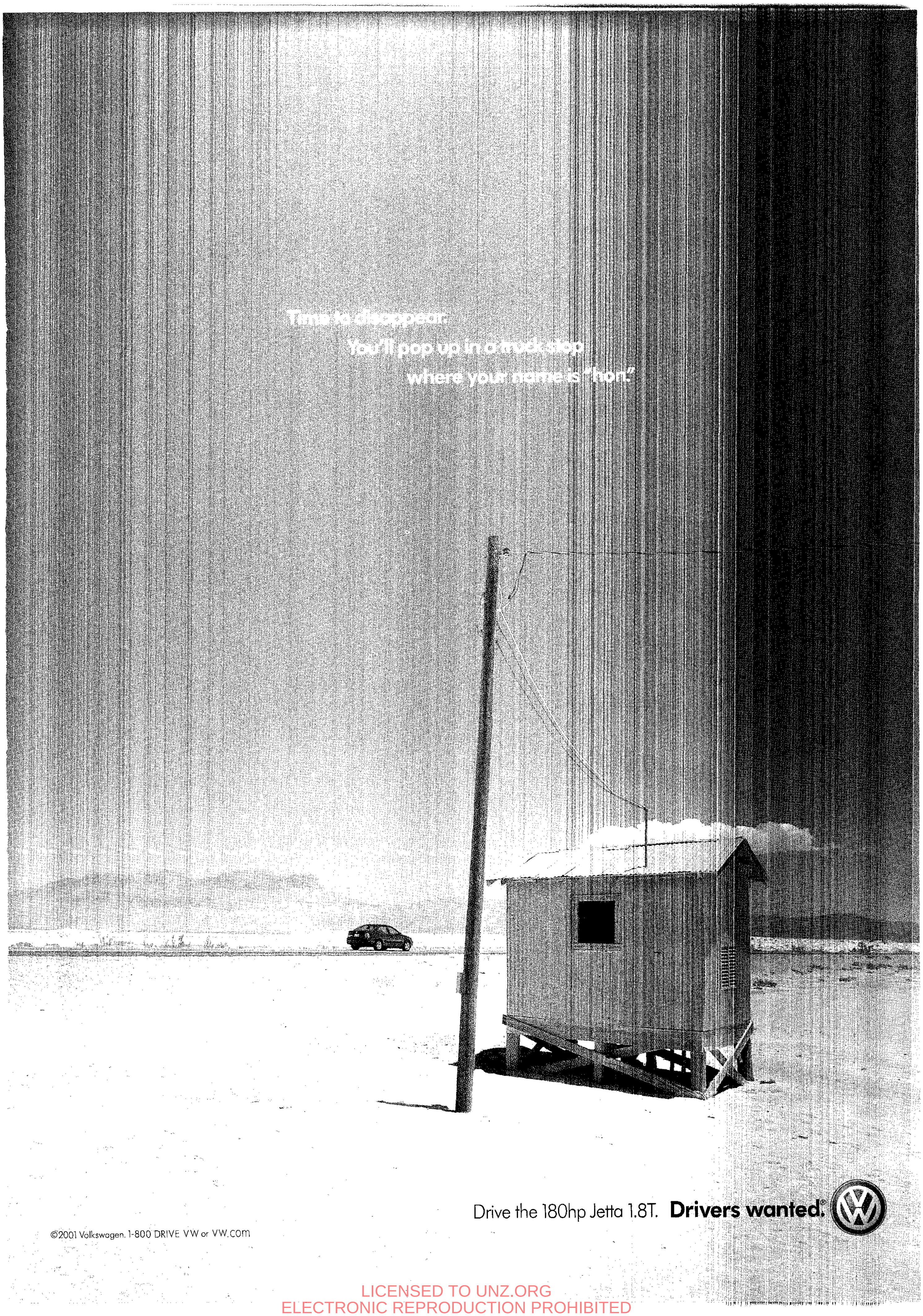
FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-315-6160)—Through May 20: The films of William Klein. April 22 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Contacts" (1986) and "Mister Freedom" (1967-68). ♦ April 29 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Ralentis" (1984; silent) and "Le Couple Témoin" (1976; in French).

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through April 24: An Elio Petri retrospective. All films are in Italian. April 17 at 2 and April 21 at 6: "Numbered Days" (1962). ♦ April 17 at 4: "We Still Kill the Old Way" (1967). ♦ April 17 at 6 and April 20 at 2: "The Tenth Victim" (1965). ♦ April 18 at 2 and April 24 at 6: "A Quiet Place in the Country" (1968). ♦ April 18 at 4:30 and April 19 at 8:15: "Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion" (1970). ♦ April 18 at 6:45 and April 20 at 4:30: "The Working Class Goes to Heaven/Lulu the Tool" (1971). ♦ April 18 at 9 and April 19 at 3:30: "Property Is No Longer Theft" (1973). ♦ April 19 at 1 and April 21 at 8:15: "Good News" (1979). ♦ April 19 at 6: "The Ladykiller of Rome" (1961). ♦ April 20 at 7: "Todo Modo" (1976). ♦ Starting April 25: "Sundance at MOMA," twenty documentaries funded by the film institute. April 25 at 1:30: Shorts from Southern Africa. ♦ April 25 at 3:30: "Iran: Veiled Appearances" (2003, Thierry Michel; in Farsi, French, and English). ♦ April 25 at 6:15 and April 27 at 4: "The Passion of María Elena" (2003, Mercedes Moncada Rodríguez; in Spanish and Raramuri). ♦ April 25 at 8:30: "Gacaca, Living Together Again in Rwanda" (2002, Anne Aghion; in Kinyarwanda). ♦ April 26 at 4: "Asurot (Detained)" (2001, Anat Even and Ada Ushpiz; in Arabic and Hebrew). ♦ April 26 at 6: "Deza-Femijet (Kosovo 2000)" (2001, Ferenc Moldoványi; in Albanian and Serbian). ♦ April 26 at 8: "And Along Came a Spider" (2002, Maziar Bahari; in Farsi). ♦ April 27 at 2: "Golan" (2003, Amit Goren; in Hebrew). ♦ April 27 at 6: "A Female Cabby in Sidi Bel-Abbès" (2000, Belkacem Hadjadj; in Arabic and French). ♦ April 27 at 8: "Georgie Girl" (2002, Annie Goldson). ♦ April 28 at 6: "When the War Is Over" (2002, François Verster; in Afrikaans and English).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. April 18-19: "The City of Lost Children" (1995, Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet; in French). ♦ April 25-26: "Wild at Heart" (1990, David Lynch).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—April 19 at 2, 3:45, and 5:30 and April 20 at 6:15, 8, and 9:45: "Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times" (2002, John Junkerman). ♦ April 19 at 7:30 and 9:15 and April 20 at 1, 2:45, and 4:30: "The Trials of Henry Kissinger" (2002, Eugene Jarecki). ♦ Starting April 26: A John Cassavetes retrospective. April 26 at 1 and April 27 at 6:30: "Shadows" (†). ♦ April 26 at 3 and April 27 at 8:15: "Faces" (1968). ♦ April 26 at 6 and April 27 at 1: "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1976). ♦ April 26 at 8 and April 27 at 3:30: "Husbands" (1970).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through May 1: "The Middle of the World: Classic and Contemporary Swiss Cinema." April 16 at 1 and 8:30: "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" (2001, Thomas Imbach; in German). ♦ April 16 at 3 and 6:40: "Romeo and Juliette in the Village" (1941, Hans Trommer and Valerien Schmidely; in German). ♦ April 16 at 4:45, April 20 at 1, and April 23 at 3:30 and 9: "Béjart Into the Light" (2002, Marcel Schüpbach; in French). ♦ April 17 at 1:30 and April 20 at 5: "A Loving Father" (2002, Jacob Berger; in French, English, and Swedish). ♦ April 17 at 3:30, April 20 at 7, and April 22 at 1: "Death in the Asylum" (1946, Leopold Lindtberg; in German). ♦ April 17 at 9: "Rapt" (1933, Dimitri Kirsanoff; in French). ♦ April 18 at 1 and 6:40 and April 19 at 7:30: "Gripsholm" (2000, Xavier Koller; in German and Swedish). ♦ April 18 at 3 and April 23 at 1:30: "Mutter" (2002, Miklòs Gimes; in German). ♦ April 18 at 5 and April 21 at 7: "Enemy in the Blood" (1931, Walter Ruttmann). ♦ April 18 at 8:45: "Jonas and Lila 'Til Tomorrow" (2000, Alain Tanner; in French). ♦ April 19 at 1 and 9:30 and April 20 at 3: "Thelma" (2001, Pierre-Alain Meier; in French, Italian, and Greek). ♦ April 19 at 3, April 21 at 8:40, and April 22 at 3:15: "Messidor" (1977, Tanner; in French). ♦ April 19 at 5:30 and April 21 at 1 and 5: "Julie's Ghost" (2002, Bettina Wilhelm; in German). ♦ April 20 at 9:15 and April 21 at 3: "Von Werra" (2002, Werner Schweizer; in German). ♦ April 23 at 6 and April 27 at 3:30: "Forget Baghdad" (2002, Samir; in Arabic, English, and Hebrew). ♦ April 24 at 2:30 and April 26 at 6:15: "The Journey to Kafiristan" (2001, Fosco and Donatello Dubini; in German). ♦ April 24 at 4:30 and April 25 at 3:15 and 9: "The Middle of the World" (1974, Tanner; in French). ♦ April 25 at 1 and 6: "Three Years in the Storm" (1999, Daniel Monnat; in French). ♦ April 26 at 2, April 27 at 6, and April 29 at 1: "Escape to Paradise" (2001, Nino Jacusso; in German and Kurdish). ♦ April 26 at 4: "Four in a Jeep" (1950, Lindtberg; in French and English). ♦ April 27 at 2 and 7:50: "Women's Misery—Women's Happiness" (1929, Eduard Tisse and Sergei Eisenstein). ♦ April 27 at 9:15 and April 29 at 9: "Éloge de l'Amour" (2001, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).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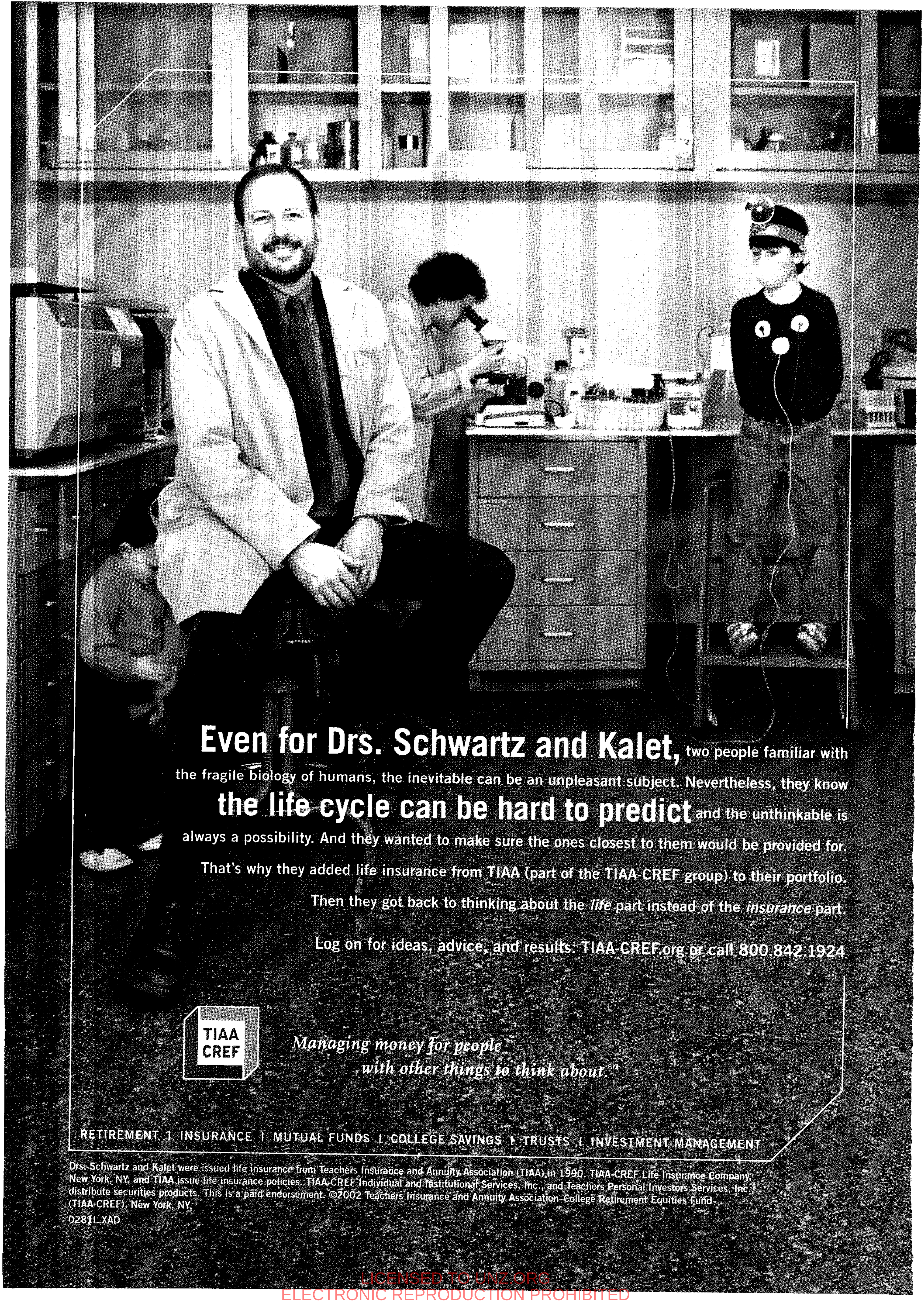

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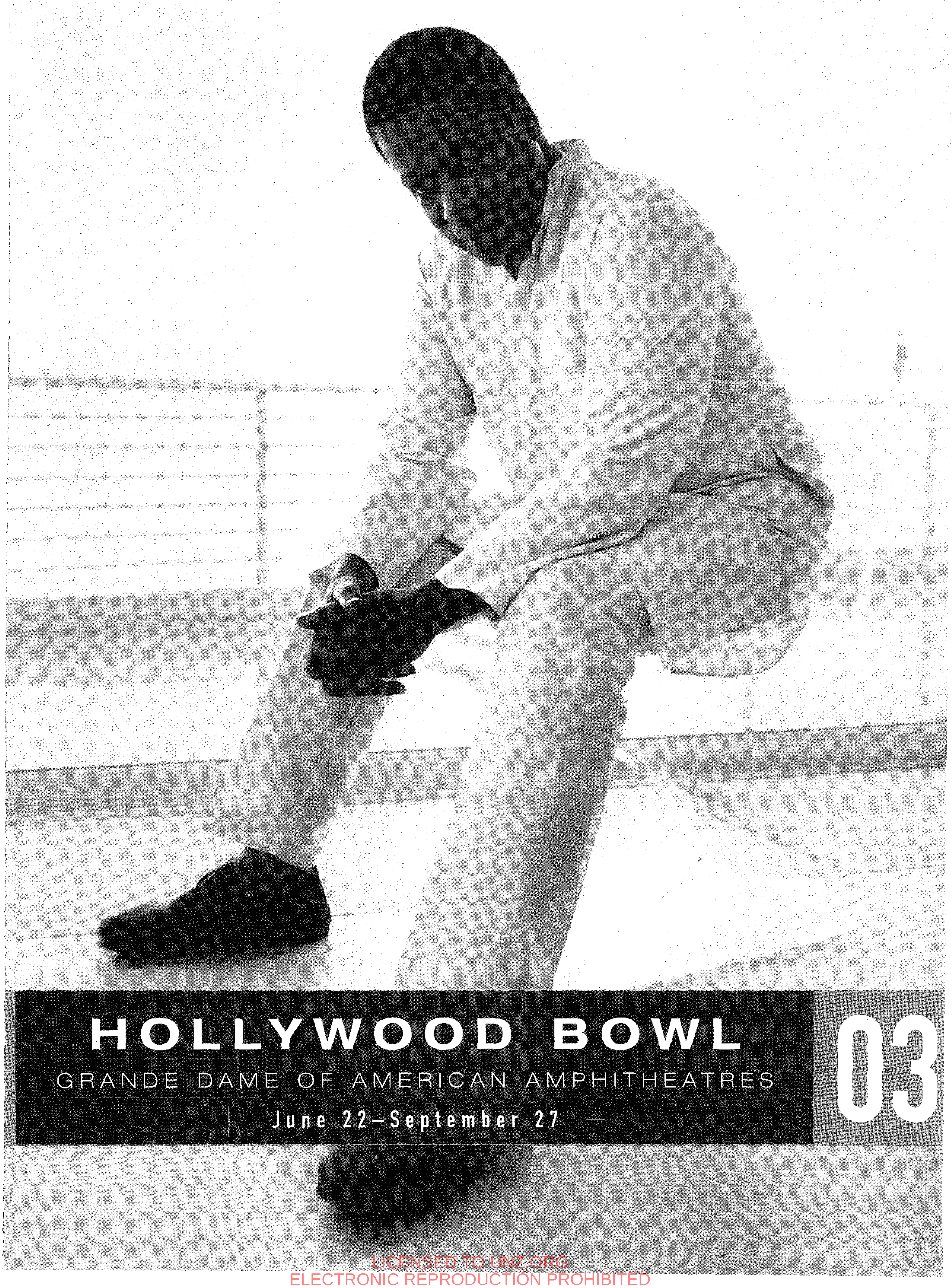


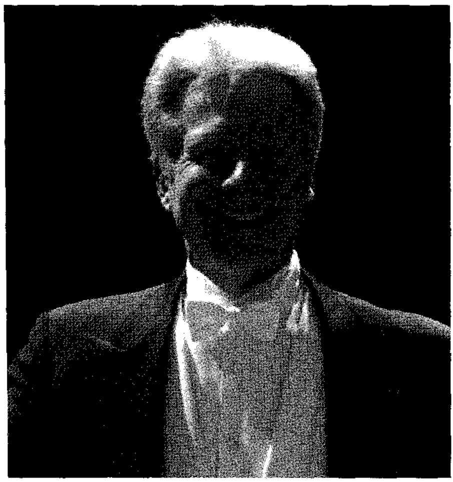
HOLLYWOOD BOWL

GRANDE DAME OF AMERICAN AMPHITHEATRES

June 22–September 27

03

THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL—poised to enter its eighty-second season—has been around longer than most movie stars. With over seventeen thousand seats, it's among the largest and most famous outdoor amphitheatres in the world. More than a million people this summer will leave the heart of Hollywood, pass the Kodak Theatre (the new home of the Academy Awards), and drive a few blocks up the Cahuenga Pass to enjoy music and a spectacle under the stars. Where else would a single dollar bill buy you a seat (albeit high up the slope on a wooden bench) for one of the world's major symphony orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic? A dollar will also let you join the musical birthday celebration on August 6th for renowned jazz saxophonist, composer, and now septuagenarian, Wayne Shorter.



All photos courtesy of the Los Angeles Philharmonic unless otherwise indicated. *Cover:* Wayne Shorter; *this page:* John Mauceri/Bob Millard, Dianne Reeves/Clay Patrick McBride, Hollywood Bowl

"It's not like anything in the world—a melting pot of music with a real spectrum of performances and two magnificent orchestras," says Deborah Borda, executive director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association. It's not easy to provide programming for a space so big and with such broad musical tastes, adds Borda. The challenge has to be met with constant innovation, while at the same time retaining, and improving upon, crowd-pleasing favorites. "We get refreshing viewpoints, and also wacky twists," says Borda. "And what could be better than ending the Philharmonic's summer at the Bowl with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, 'Choral'?"

The Bowl is rightly known for its populist point of view, and cornerstones of its tradition are invention and experimentation. Creative programming that mixes genres, styles, and artists in interesting ways has secured the Bowl a reputation for innovation.

At the helm of the eighty-musician Hollywood Bowl Orchestra is the Grammy, Tony, and Emmy Award-winning conductor John Mauceri, who has been a fount of inspiration since the orchestra was recreated for him in 1991. (Its predecessor was the Hollywood Bowl Symphony founded by Leopold Stokowski in 1945.) Mauceri has launched such novel firsts as the mini-staged Broadway musical accompanied by a full symphony orchestra, and the movie night with live music and clips from famous films. Under Mauceri, the Bowl's programs have been so popular that more than three million people have attended them.

"The wonderful thing about programming the Bowl is that you kind of parse things, you kind of group things," says Mauceri. "Some things are known, some things are less known. But the way you've collected and presented them is completely new. It's really fun, like a gigantic crossword puzzle." After twelve years, Mauceri considers his mission "to compete with myself—to find constantly evolving and challenging and entertaining programming that is not repetitive." With legendary performers (Carol Channing will be one this summer), the payoff, Mauceri says, is when the magic clicks. "These are moments when the audience actually knows they're part of history."

Perhaps the biggest news this summer is the appointment of acclaimed vocalist and two-time Grammy winner Dianne Reeves to the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association's creative chair for jazz. "We created almost a university professorship with Dianne, and I'm sure we're one of the only orchestras in America with a creative chair for jazz," says Borda. With her next Blue Note album, "A Little Moonlight" due in August, Reeves has programmed eight jazz concerts for her first Bowl lineup. "I want people to see that jazz is a very broad art form, so there will be gospel music—the very roots of jazz—and blues, which I feel is to jazz music as blood is to the body."

Reeves has drawn upon her intimate knowledge of the jazz world to assemble several artists in programs devoted to a single subject. "What I love about the season is it's going to be nights of artists, all of them great musicians, who come together for one focus." One evening will pay homage to piano master Oscar Peterson and bassist Ray Brown, another to Wayne Shorter. The Ella Fitzgerald program has Dee Dee Bridgewater, Cleo Laine, and Janis Siegel, "who has done so much work in the artistry of Ella," says Reeves.

"It was actually easier than I thought it was going to be," Reeves admits. In the end, though, there were too many ideas and not enough slots. As a result, some ideas—like commissioned pieces—will have to wait until next summer.

THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL CALENDAR OF EVENTS SAMPLER

From the tried and true to the adventurous to the just plain zany, the Hollywood Bowl's eighty-second season promises to be a summer of delight and surprise, as the Bowl pursues its winning formula of blending symphonic music with opera, jazz, world music, pop, musical theatre, and movie music. Here are some of the highlights:

June 29

The Bowl's annual celebration of global divas features Cape Verde "barefoot diva" Cesaria Evora, noted for opening the door for the next generation of female vocalists that includes Skye Edwards of Morcheeba and Middle-Eastern electronica mistress, Natacha Atlas.

July 5

A newly restored print of "The Wizard of Oz" plays on the giant screen as the audience provides the vocal prowess for the latest of the Bowl's sing-a-long movie musicals.

July 6

The greatest d.j. in the world, Paul Oakenfold brought house music to the masses. Guaranteed to move the crowd, "Oakey" hosts a giant outdoor electronica party bridging the gap between house and world music.

July 11–12

Tenormania as The Irish Tenors (Anthony Kearns, Ronan Tynan, and Finbar Wright) join Three Mo' Tenors (African-Americans Victor Trent Cook, Rodrick Dixon, and Thomas Young) in a vocal extravaganza with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

July 13

John Mauceri will be the principal conductor when the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra presents its annual Sunday Sunset concert version of an opera. This year, Verdi's tragic masterpiece, "La traviata," will feature coloratura soprano Elizabeth Futral in the role of Violetta, and lyric tenor Frank Lopardo singing Alfredo.

July 18–19

British composer George Fenton's Emmy-winning score for the BBC/Discovery Channel documentary "The Blue Planet" will be presented "live" as footage from the series is projected on the big screen. Fenton will conduct in a début performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

July 23

João Gilberto, the legendary Brazilian creator of the bossa nova sound, brings his distinctive hushed vocals and haunting guitar rhythms back to the Bowl for the first time since 1964.

July 29, 31

Internationally renowned Korean soprano Sumi Jo, with more than thirty albums to her credit, returns from performing at the Olympics galas in Sydney and Seoul to offer a program of operatic crowd-pleasers.

July 30

The role played by the scores of composer and trumpeter Terence Blanchard in Spike Lee's movies will be explored with scenes from "Mo' Better Blues," "Jungle Fever," "Malcolm X," "Clockers," "The 25th Hour," "Bamboozled," and others. Blanchard will serve as music director for the jazz, pop, and orchestral ensemble, while Spike Lee will host the event.

August 3

A mini-production of "My Fair Lady"—complete with sets, costumes, and choreography—is staged with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra in this year's tribute to Broadway musicals.

August 6

Jazz saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter, a six-time Grammy winner, celebrates his seventieth birthday with his quartet, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and a few friends and collaborators—Herbie Hancock and Tony Award-winning tap dancer and choreographer Savion Glover.

August 10

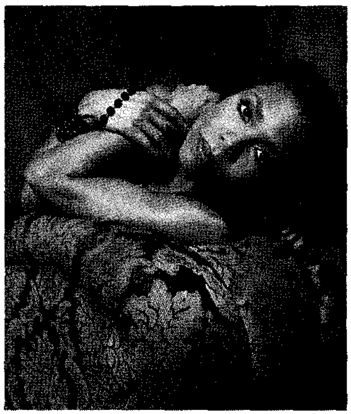
Distinguished classical cellist Yo-Yo Ma, a fourteen-time Grammy winner, showcases his wide-ranging musical appetite in a program based on Brazilian and Latin American music, with indigenous musicians and vocalists.

August 13

Patrice Rushen directs an all-star jazz orchestra in a celebration of Ella Fitzgerald's career as the "First Lady of Song," with vocalists Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dame Cleo Laine, Kevin Mahogany, the Manhattan Transfer's Janis Siegel, and Denzal Sinclaire.

August 15–16

John Mauceri and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra provide tripartite homage to Shakespeare's tragic lovers with Tchaikovsky's symphonic poem "Romeo and Juliet," Prokofiev's score for the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and Leonard Bernstein's Americanized take on the tale from "West Side Story."



This page left to right: Three Mo' Tenors, Dee Dee Bridgewater, João Gilberto

August 19, 21
In a reprise of the notable PBS special event (broadcast last New Year's Eve), this two-part program features Virginia Symphony and Buffalo Philharmonic music director JoAnn Falletta conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons," followed by composer and violinist Mark O'Connor performing his "The American Seasons."

August 22–23
Multi-Grammy winner Tony Bennett, one of the Bowl's most enduringly popular performers since his first appearance in 1962, returns for his ninth visit.

August 26
Bernard Labadie, the artistic and music director of L'Opera de Québec, and the music director of New York's "Mostly Mozart" festival, conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic in an all-Mozart program.

August 27
Jazz pianist Oscar Peterson and his quartet bring on the swing, while Grammy-winning vocalist and Bowl creative chair for jazz Dianne Reeves performs and also presents a tribute to Ray Brown with Jazz Hall of Fame trumpeter Clark Terry and bassist John Clayton.

September 11
The transcendent magic of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, "Choral" fills Bolton Canyon as music director Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

September 12–14
The Peking Acrobats début at the Bowl with John Mauceri conducting the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. The close of the official season will be marked by fireworks, a timely tribute since fireworks are a Chinese invention.

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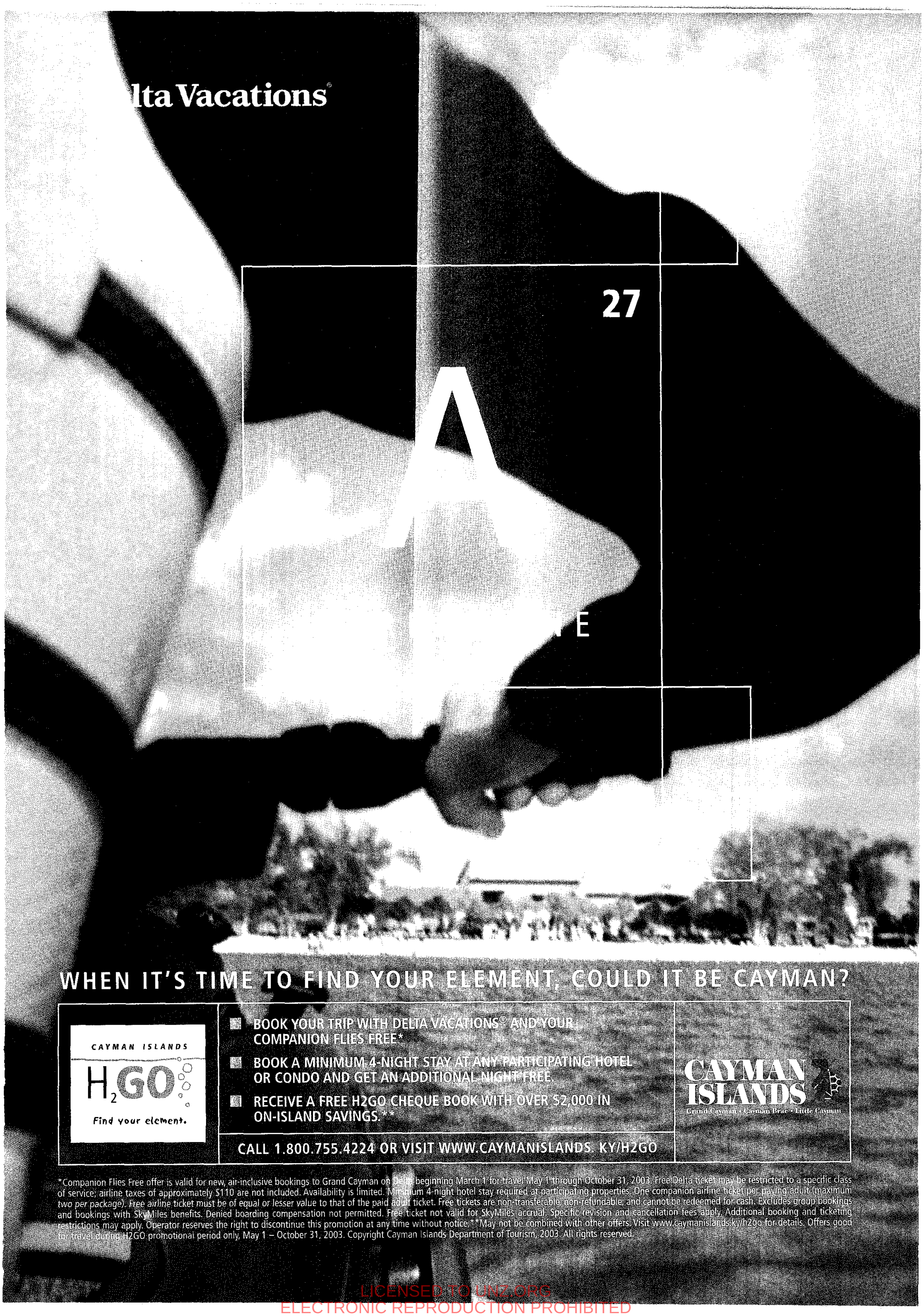
Top: Terence Blanchard; *left to right:* The Peking Acrobats © Peking Acrobats, The Irish Tenors, Tony Bennett/RPM Music



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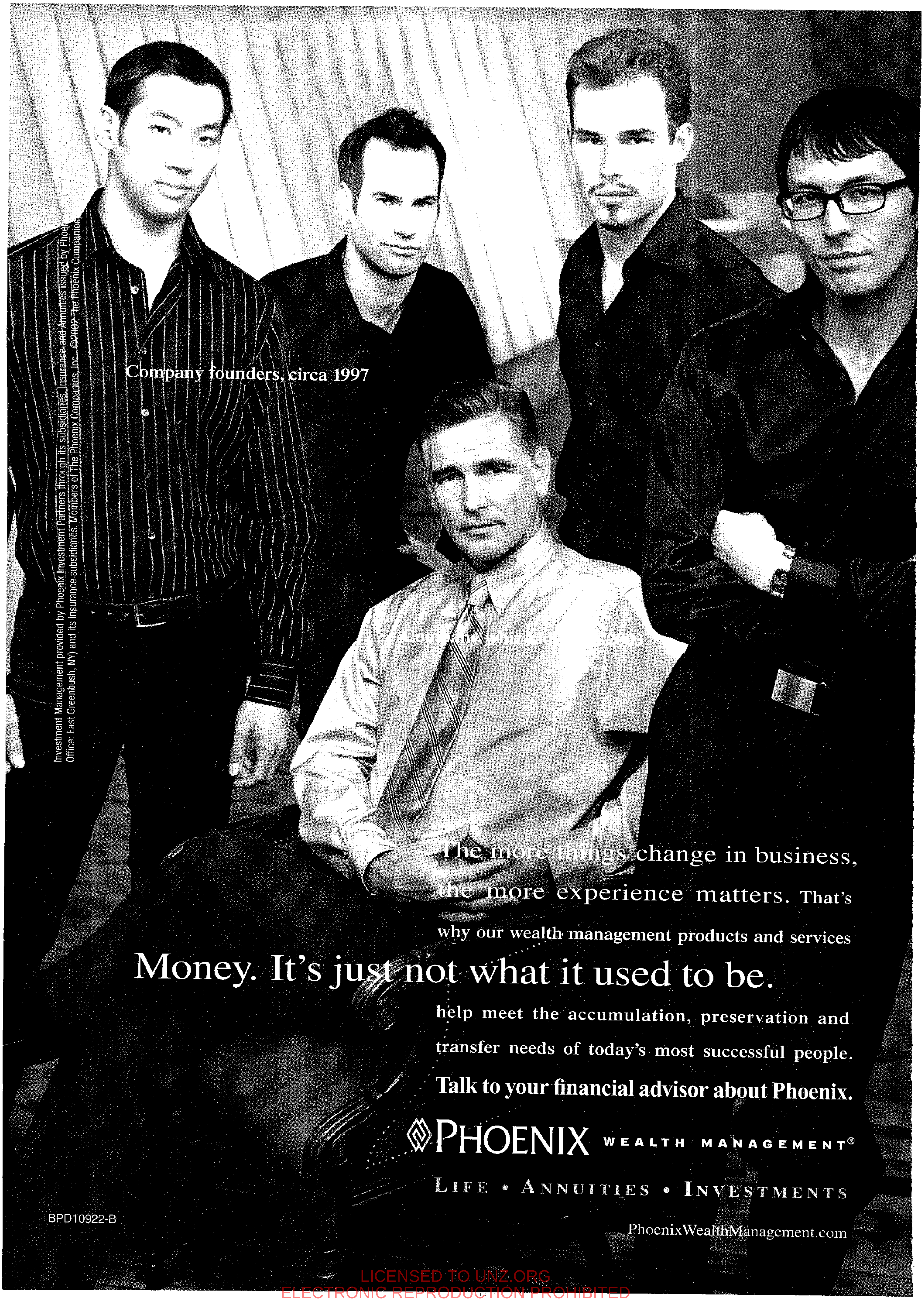

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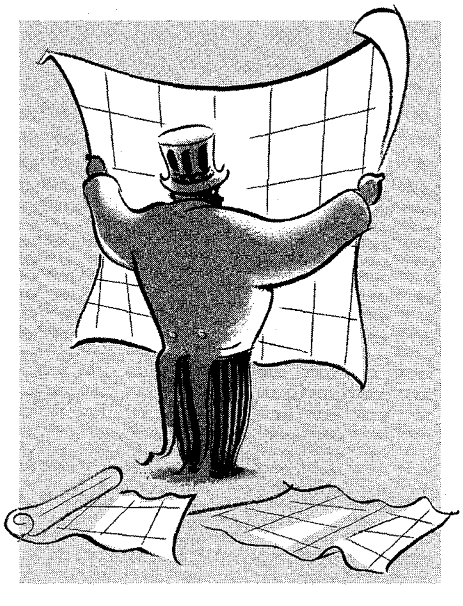
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
WAR WITHOUT END?

Saddam Hussein, who came to power in 1979 declaring his intention to combine the glory of Nebuchadnezzar with the methods of Josef Stalin, no longer rules Iraq, and not to feel relief at the prospect of a world without him is to be possessed of a grudging heart. In a region well stocked with tyrants and autocrats, Saddam was singular in his ambitions, though not in the way proposed by his cult of personality. His record of murder, torture, aggression, intimidation, and subjugation is inscribed in the documentary reports of Human Rights Watch and in the souls of the traumatized ex-subjects who have survived to hammer at his fallen monuments. And yet it would also require a constricted conscience to declare the Anglo-American invasion finished business while so much of the world remains alarmed or enraged at the level of its presumption—and while so many dead go uncounted. It is hard to put a name to what has happened (to what is happening still), not least because the Bush Administration's intentions, both within Iraq and beyond it, are still a question of deepest concern.

Historical analogy has been a crude instrument in the service of moral and political certainty. For a while, we did without history. We were at the end of history, our circumstance novel beyond compare. Modernity was triumphant, and it would bring democracy everywhere and a Dow without limit. But an attack on an iconic center of modernity on September 11, 2001, and then a war in an ancient place, along the Tigris and the Euphrates, brought history back in a tidal rush. And so this has been a period of incessant historical reference. To the most unequivocal hawks, Saddam was Hitler; 2003 was 1938; Kofi Annan, Jacques Chirac, and Colin Powell were the heirs of Neville Chamberlain. As the doves saw things, Bush and his Cabinet members were manipulating the facts the way Lyndon Johnson did at the Gulf of Tonkin, and were determined to invade and raze a foreign country in the pursuit of a new kind of domino theory. The invasion of Iraq, to its fiercest opponents, was sure to be the Athenians' vainglorious assault on Sicily as described in "The Peloponnesian War," the horror of 1914 depicted in "The Guns of August," the naïve folly of "The Quiet American." Where some saw the liberation of Paris, others envisioned a Mesopotamian Stalingrad.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC PALMA

Even now, as Baghdad falls after three weeks of startling military advance, one can go on choosing among images and reference points. The "jubilant" crowd described in detail late last week by the Associated Press encourages one kind of analogy, the photograph of a hideously wounded child in *Time* quite another. Americans will not write this history on their terms alone, and the way in which it is written, absorbed, and understood by us, by the Europeans, by the Islamic world, and, most of all, by the Iraqis themselves will depend largely upon what comes next. What are the Administration's true ambitions?

There is little doubt that some of the most hawkish ideologues in and around the Bush Administration entertain dreams of a kind of endless war. James Woolsey, a former director of Central Intelligence who has been proposed as a Minister of Information in Iraq by Donald Rumsfeld, forecasts a Fourth World War (the third, of course, having been the Cold War), which will last "considerably longer" than either of the first two. One senior British official dryly told *Newsweek* before the invasion, "Everyone wants to go to Baghdad. Real men want to go to Tehran." And then, presumably, to Damascus, Beirut, Khartoum, Sanaa, Pyongyang. Richard Perle, one of the most influential advisers to the Pentagon, told an audience not long ago that, with a successful invasion of Iraq, "we could deliver a short message, a two-word message: 'You're next.'"

The Middle East is rife with regimes that support, each in its own way, dangerous and destabilizing terrorist groups, from Hezbollah to Al Qaeda. A stable, independent, and free Iraq—which will take years to achieve—might well exert a powerful influence. But if the invasion of Iraq emboldens American ideologues to the point of triumphalism and hubris, to the point where every world-transforming fantasy is to be proposed and indulged without brake, then those whose historical analogy of choice was 1914 could prove to be possessed not only of a tragic view of life but also of a terrifyingly convincing argument.

The moral and political critics of a war in Iraq were surely correct to say that the worst consequence, beyond the thousands of lives lost, was the erosion of our relations with many of our allies and their publics. There is hypocrisy everywhere (Russia's lectures on the exercise of American power seem hollow after the devastation of Chechnya), but it is long past the moment for debate, even with the French. The future is what counts. Some liberal internationalists, having seen the use of force come to a decent end in Kosovo and (finally) in Bosnia, supported this war. But among them, as among the opponents of the war, there has been a profound sense of anxiety that the Administration was recklessly indifferent to the imperfect but irreplaceable structures of international order built over sixty years.

And now, in the language of Beltway strutting, are we really to "do" Syria or Iran? Recently, in the pages of *Policy Review*—a conservative journal that is enjoying the vogue and influence in right-leaning circles that *Commentary* did in the nineteen-eighties—Ken Jowitt, a political-science professor who divides his time between the Hoover Institution and the University of California at Berkeley, challenges a "magic bullet" scenario in which the toppling of Saddam will act as a regional democratic stimulus so powerful that the Iranians will suddenly rise up against the ayatollahs, the autocrats of Egypt and Jordan will liberalize, and the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, "being an ophthalmologist, will see the regional writing on the wall." Jowitt is rightly dubious of an ongoing evangelical adventure. He writes, "The magic bullet scenario effectively transforms and elevates a local, dangerous-but-mundane effort to remove a pathological killer, Saddam Hussein, into a successful democratic crusade that transforms the 'last' anti-modern, anti-democratic capitalist region of the world: the Muslim Middle East. One might at least consider the fate of earlier Western crusades."

In a report from Damascus in the *Times* last week, Neil MacFarquhar quoted Sayyid Abu Murtadah al-Yasiri, an Iraqi exile and cleric who fled Najaf twenty-three years ago, after his own religious mentor, the grand ayatollah, was murdered by Saddam's men. Al-Yasiri said, "We are happy to be rid of injustice, but we fear the Americans' intentions." The lifting of that fear, and of similar fears throughout the Middle East, must be a priority.

America's list of responsibilities in Iraq hardly ends with military conquest, and it leaves little room for adventuring. Tens of thousands of soldiers will need to remain in Iraq long enough to prevent civil unrest or even civil war, while being vigilant against snipers, terror attacks, and guerrilla reprisals like last Thursday's suicide bombing in Baghdad. Food, water, electricity, medicine, and other resources will need to be rapidly distributed. The production and flow of oil, the source of Iraqi wealth, will need to be maintained in a way that does not imply an occupier's exploitation. And then there is the question of helping to build a free state on the rubble of tyranny. To stage-manage a hasty election of surrogates and then beat a fast retreat would confirm suspicions of American inconstancy no less than the rapid elevation of Halliburton, Bechtel, and Exxon Mobil as the titans of Iraqi industry.

Amid the celebrations and the darker scenes of death and looting, the indelible image and photo op of the fall of Baghdad was the toppling of Saddam's statue on Firdos Square, an image that could not fail to echo the destruction of similarly forbidding icons in Moscow more than a decade ago. And yet that resonance should be deep and instructive: the initial fireworks blast of promise in Moscow soon settled down into years of painful transformation. In some of the states of the former Soviet Union, autocrats still reign. "When smashing monuments," the Polish Holocaust survivor and satirist Stanislaw Lec once remarked, "save the pedestals—they always come in handy." If the world is to escape such dark prophecies, the Bush Administration will have to demonstrate the political skills to master a project it famously disdained: nation-building. To help create a liberal state following a military invasion is an enormously radical, and delicate, project. Here the prize is not power but something more elusive—legitimacy. There are many ways for the United States to press the case for peace and political reform in the Middle East. A doctrine of permanent revolution, however, brings to mind no analogies in history to comfort us. The phrase is Trotsky's, and the precedent is catastrophe.

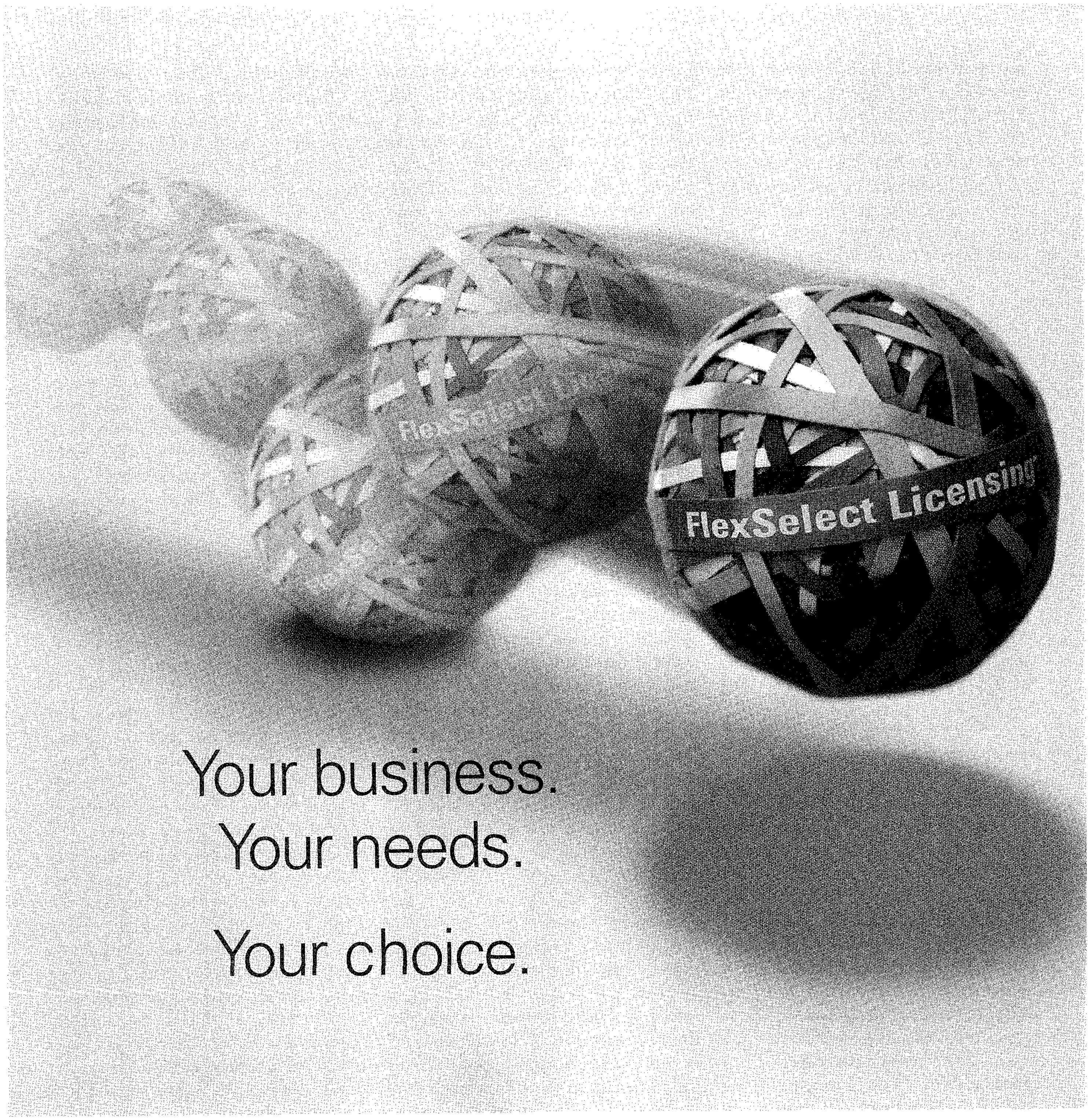
—*David Remnick*

DOHA POSTCARD

A CENTCOM STAR

Last week, when Tariq Ayoub, an Al Jazeera correspondent, was killed by an American air strike on the Arabic satellite channel's Baghdad offices, military officials at Central Command in Doha, Qatar, hastily drew up a news release. "According to commanders on the ground," the statement read, "Coalition forces came under significant enemy fire from the building where the Al Jazeera journalists were working and, consistent with the inherent right of self-defense, Coalition forces returned fire."

Before releasing the statement to the media, a CENTCOM representative visited Al Jazeera's cubicle in the Coalition Media Center to run it by Omar al-Issawi, a reporter and producer at the network. Al-Issawi, who was a friend of Ayoub, took a quick look at the release and was incensed. "This is not acceptable," he told the CENTCOM representative. "I guarantee you there was no fire coming from our building." Al Jazeera's offices, he noted later, were housed in a clearly marked two-story villa whose precise coördinates had been provided to the Pentagon to avoid just such a tragedy. Al-Issawi was not suggesting, as many ob-



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servers in the Middle East were, that the armed forces had deliberately targeted the network (although he did find it curious that American forces had also fired on the offices of Abu Dhabi Television that day, and that they'd bombed an Al Jazeera office in Afghanistan in November, 2001). "Maybe it was a mistake," he said. "They should have come out and admitted it and said they were sorry. This was just not *on*."

Omar al-Issawi

Officials at CENTCOM didn't change their statement, but the fact that they even bothered to show it to al-Issawi demonstrates how far Al Jazeera has come in gaining a measure of respect in the eyes of the U.S. military. At the war's outset, Al Jazeera was widely considered a rogue state among journalistic enterprises. Its decision to broadcast lurid footage of captured and apparently executed American soldiers was particularly objectionable. At CENTCOM, Lieutenant General John Abizaid took the opportunity, during a daily briefing, to decry the "disgusting" images, scolding al-Issawi: "I regard the showing of those pictures as absolutely unacceptable." Afterward, al-Issawi was philosophical. "Look, the General's reaction was perfectly understandable," he said. "Those were his boys. As a reporter for Al Jazeera, I have been harassed and threatened by intelligence agencies. This was pretty mild, actually."

As the war has progressed, however, al-Issawi has become something of a celebrity, emerging as one of the more eloquent and coolheaded commentators. George Stephanopoulos and Matt Lauer have long since decamped for home, and other news organizations have pulled out entirely, but al-Issawi remains a popular fixture. At CENTCOM, Al Jazeera's office is next to the briefing room on "Coalition Way" (all the hallways have semi-facetious designations), and al-Issawi's reserved seat at briefings is in the front row, near the podium, next to CNN's. When al-Issawi raises his hand, Brigadier General Vincent Brooks almost always calls on him, addressing him as "Omar."

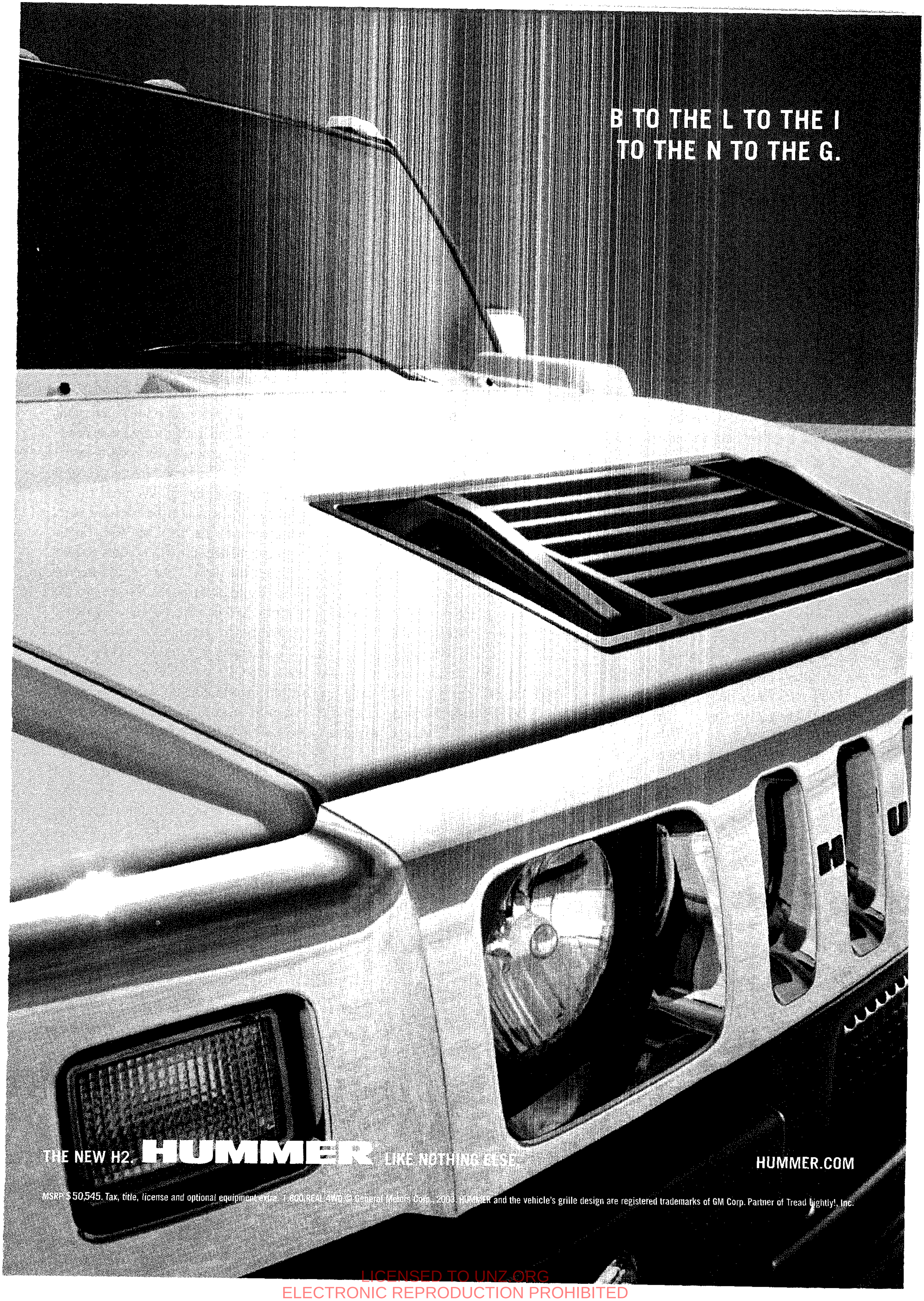
"Slowly, people at CENTCOM are starting to realize that we're not the enemy," al-Issawi said last week, before his colleague was killed. "We're not some insensitive monster bent on bashing America." Al-Issawi has a taut, lean build and the cautious air of a man who has weathered many controversies and covered many wars. Thirty-six years old, he is a Lebanese citizen who was born and raised in Kuwait and educated at colleges in Iowa and Virginia. He speaks in a determined, formal Sidney Poitier kind of English, his voice low and soft and mellowed by Marlboros. He wears desert khakis, suède boots, and an impressively pocketed correspondent's jacket, and often carries a stainless-steel thermos filled with viscous Turkish coffee. He collects silk textiles and fine kilims on his frequent travels as a foreign correspondent and likes to rocket around Doha in his new BMW M3, listening to heavy metal.

The other day, al-Issawi parked his car in the stony lot outside CENTCOM, then inched through security, past the bomb-sniffing dog and the X-ray machine and the poster of the world's "most wanted terrorists." He boarded the media shuttle bus, which made its way past a reef of concrete barriers and stopped outside the prefabricated metal warehouse that serves as the Coalition Media Center. Inside, al-Issawi was immediately accosted by well-wishers and back-slappers. "Omar—my man!" an Army officer said. "Caught you on Larry King again," a television producer said, with a wink. A reporter from *The Nation* told al-Issawi that he was becoming a favorite among female viewers back in America. "They say they can't decide which is more beautiful, your Arabic or your English," he said. Another CENTCOM journalist suggested, "You've risen to star status." Al-Issawi scowled. "Let's hope not," he replied. "They say the light from a star reaches us long after it has depleted its resources."

Al-Issawi got his start in broadcasting in 1987, as a d.j. for an FM station in Beirut, spinning Led Zeppelin, Iron Maiden, and Pink Floyd tunes while war raged in the streets. In 1994, he moved to London to work for the BBC's Arabic World Service Television. He was sent to Yemen, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Bosnia, where he sustained a gunshot wound in the leg. (A BBC colleague was killed in the same attack.) When the BBC disbanded the Arabic station, in 1996, a nucleus of the staff, including al-Issawi, moved to Qatar to create Al Jazeera, a satellite news channel for the Arab world, funded by a hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar grant from the country's own "central commander," the jolly, British-educated, polygamous Emir of Qatar—Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. In 2000, al-Issawi made an acclaimed fifteen-part documentary for Al Jazeera about the Lebanese war, which gave him new insights into the perils and complexities of occupying a war-torn country.

Shortly before this war started, al-Issawi travelled to Iraq to conduct some interviews for a documentary that he's producing about the P.L.O. "I found it one of the saddest, most stifling places on earth," he said. "It's the most brutal regime the world has seen since Stalin. I vowed I would never go back again until Saddam has been evicted from power." When the war began, he was relieved to stay at home and cover events from the relative security of CENTCOM. But, now that Saddam seems to be gone and CENTCOM is gradually folding its tents, al-Issawi, like most of the other journalists posted here, has been looking north toward Baghdad. "I'm just waiting for my orders," he said.

At the end of a long day at CENTCOM, al-Issawi retrieved his BMW and drove through the desert toward the fantastical modern skyline of Doha. He was bleary-eyed and looking forward to a Heineken. He put on a Black Sabbath CD—"post-Ozzie, I'm afraid." Very soon, he said, the war would be over, the CENTCOM hordes would go away, and only Al Jazeera would be left. Yet things would never be the same—not in Doha, not anywhere in the Middle East. "With this war, your country has set something in motion across the whole region," he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said. "All Arab eyes will be watching to see what you do. It's a test, an experiment. Everything is uncertain. Everything except this: we can never go back."

—*Hampton Sides*

EXILE DEPT.
THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

Framed posters of men wearing head scarves and long black beards cover the walls of the anteroom at 85-34 Midland Parkway, a converted brick ranch house in a leafy enclave of Jamaica, Queens. In a hallway two maps of Iraq—pre- and post-1900—hang side by side. They identify the locations and dates of significant incidents in the eradication of the country's Jewish population, from a raid on Baghdad synagogues in 1333 to the public hanging of nine accused spies, by the newly ensconced Baath Party, in 1969.

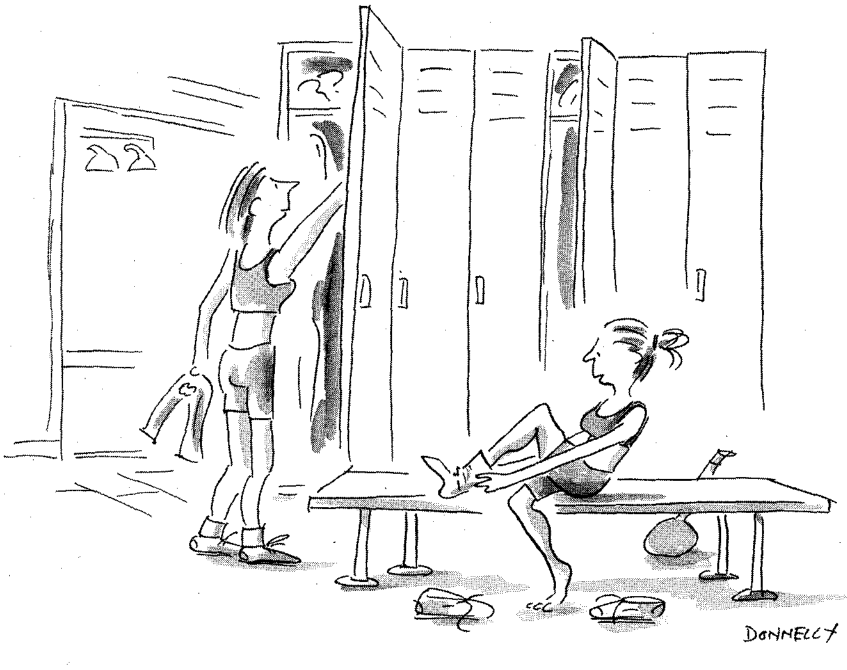
"I call them the Talibans," David Shohet said the other day, gesturing toward the posters. "Because of those beards. Don't they look like they would be Talibans?" They do, perhaps, but he was careful to explain that the men in the pictures are actually eminent Babylonian rabbis, from the past couple of hundred years. Shohet, who wore an American-flag pin on the lapel of his suit jacket, is the vice-president of Congregation Bene Naharayim, a synagogue that has a membership of more than four hundred Iraqi Jewish families. (By last known count, there are only thirty-six Jews left in Baghdad.) In New York City, where the population of Iraqi-born immigrants is about twelve hundred, it is Jews who constitute the largest and most organized Iraqi presence, and Bene Naharayim's ranch house of worship is the capital by proxy.

Shohet was at the synagogue, along with seventy or so other Iraqis, for regular Sabbath services, and also for a memorial service for a longtime member, Simha. In the sanctuary, which had been created out of two bedrooms, worshippers passed around a photograph of Simha taken in Baghdad, in 1941, while the cantor conducted prayers in an Aramaic-inflected dialect particular to Iraqi Judaism. Midway through the service, a woman addressed the group in English, delivering a sort of congregation news briefing. When she finished, a man shouted out, "You forgot to give us the weather in Baghdad!"

"Hot!" a woman called back.

"It's raining fire!" a man said.

"And Basra?" the first man asked. (A lone elderly Jewish woman is believed to have taken refuge in a Christian church in Basra.)



"I didn't protest this war, but I'll try to protest the next one."

"One hundred degrees!" another woman said.

After the service, copies of a weekly Arabic newspaper, which is published by Iraqi émigrés in England, were handed out, and the men and women of Bene Naharayim gathered to eat lunch—hard-boiled eggs, fava beans, hummus, bagels, pickled mangoes, whitefish—at picnic tables arranged below the "Talibans."

These Iraqis had been watching the war with great interest, not only because they support it without exception but also because the steady stream of images has awakened nostalgia.

"The majority of the pictures that we see on TV are of areas that are known to us," Maurice Shohet, the congregation's president (and no relation to David), said. "My family lived in Baghdad, in the Masbah district, among our neighbors—Muslims and Christians—in a peaceful and lovely relationship. We used to socialize with them and be friendly with them, up until the Six-Day War. That's when the change started, and they started to arrest the Jews." (In September of 1970, he and his family fled to the north, where a Kurdish paratrooper escorted them across the mountains into Iran.)

"I can't believe, when I look at the TV news, that I used to ride my bike on Rashid Street," David Shohet, who left Iraq in 1956, said. "It used to be the main street, something like Broadway in Baghdad. And Abu Nawas was like Riverside Drive. A lot of my friends lived there, and I used to go visit them. There were cafés right on the water, with music blasting, and you'd sit down and have a cup of coffee. It was very nice."

Across the table, a friendly argument arose between an elderly man, who was seated, and a younger man, who was standing near the door, over parking spots in the synagogue driveway. "You are like Saddam," the older man said. "You boss people around, and they are scared of you."

"In my youth, we had a very good life," Violet Aghassi, who left Iraq in 1947 and now lives in Forest Hills, said. "The food is good—it's a fertile land. The men used to work until two o'clock and then go to the cafés. We—the women of the house—didn't do anything. Baghdad was the best place." She paused to imagine what might be. "My son, he has never been. After the war, he said, he will go with me."

—*Ben McGrath*

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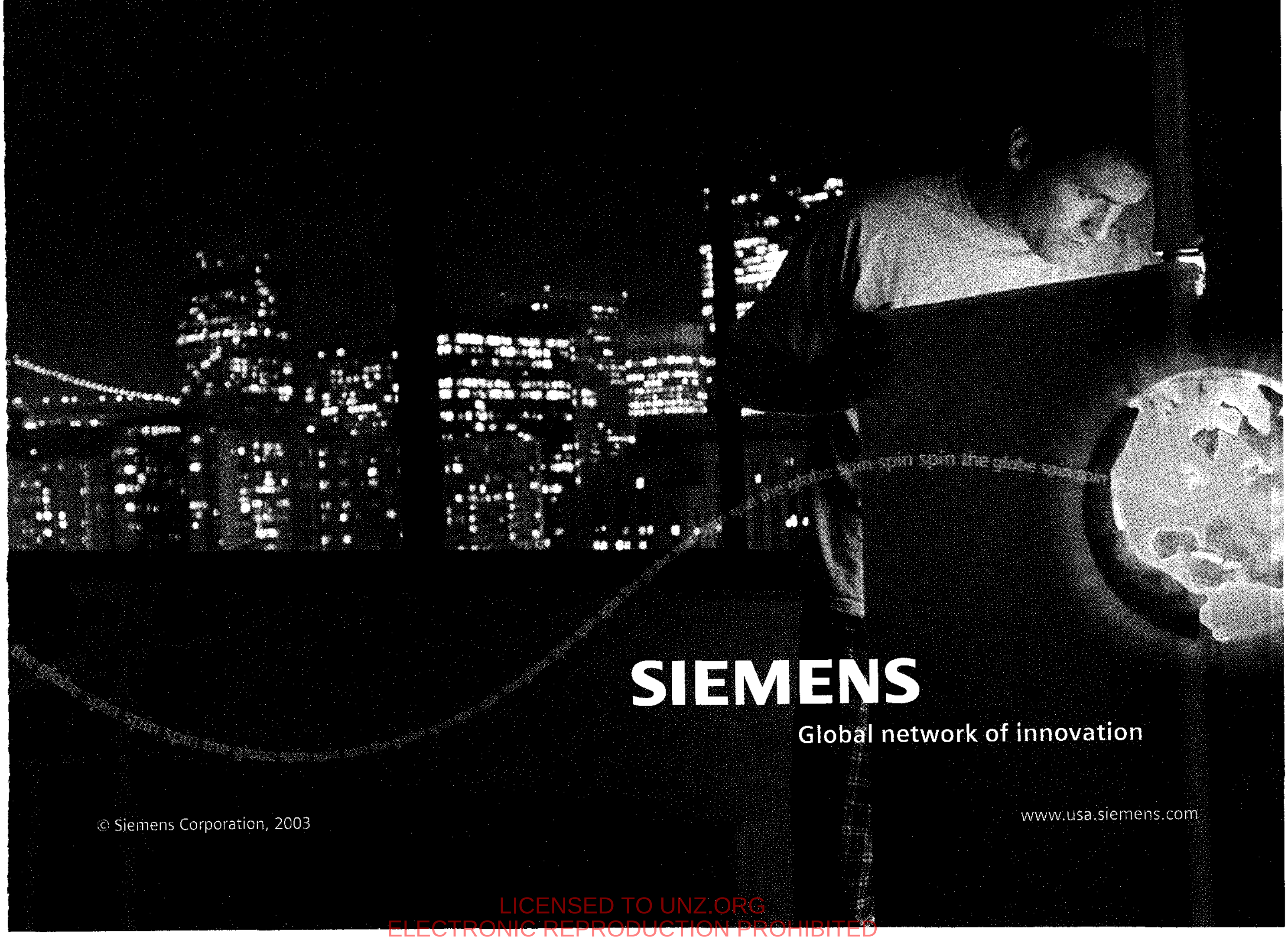
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THE FINANCIAL PAGE
A CUT TOO FAR

In the United States, war has traditionally meant higher taxes. During the Civil War, Congress passed the first federal income tax in history, and put levies on all manufactured goods. During the First World War, the top income-tax rate rose to seventy-seven per cent. The Second World War gave us the modern tax system, withholding, and a tenfold increase in the number of Americans who had to write checks to the government. Tax hikes also accompanied the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam.

With the economy in the doldrums and American troops already in Baghdad, it's not surprising that Congress chose not to raise taxes this time around. What's striking is that Congress chose to cut them instead, brushing aside concerns about the war's cost and our four-hundred-billion-dollar budget deficit. House Majority Whip Tom DeLay summed up the prevailing mood when he said, "Nothing is more important in the face of a war than cutting taxes." In Washington these days, tax cuts are the solution to every conceivable circumstance—war or peace, surpluses or deficits, recession or boom.

The current worship of tax cuts dates back, of course, to Ronald Reagan and the so-called supply-side revolution. When Reagan was elected, the American economy was a shambles, and the supply-siders thought they knew why: marginal tax rates—the rates you pay on every additional dollar you earn—were too high. In 1980, the top rate was seventy per cent, and the supply-siders argued that rates like that discourage people from working or investing. When the government takes seventy cents of every dollar of your raise or bonus, you might just give up trying to make more money and hit the beach instead. Cut marginal rates, they said, and people will decide to work harder, and to start new businesses or invest in them. The ensuing boom in economic growth should compensate for any short-term loss of tax revenue.

Whatever the merits of this argument—and economists have spent the past two decades poking it full of holes—it carried the day politically. Reagan's tax cuts slashed the top marginal rate to twenty-eight per cent, and the economy recovered. But the supply-siders' victory turned out to be Pyrrhic. A backlash against ballooning deficits and widening inequality sent the supply-siders underground. By the early nineties, even most conservative Republicans eschewed the supply-side label.

Although the rationale has survived, and is still trotted out by those who support today's cuts, it has been eclipsed, at least partly, by what you might call the moral case against taxation. This one has deep roots. As Steven Weisman relates in his new book, "The Great Tax Wars," the men who fiercely opposed the income tax a century ago insisted that taxation was inherently evil. ("When a man has accumulated a sum of money within the law . . . the people no longer have any right to share in the earnings," John D. Rockefeller said.) Though such righteous cupidity gave way, over the years, to a grudging consensus in favor of progressive taxation, it was resurrected, in the nineteen-nineties, by mainstream conservatives.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Steve Forbes, advocating a flat tax during the 1996 Presidential campaign, spoke of taxes' "corrosive impact on our civic life," and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, in 1998, called the typical family's tax burden "immoral." Such rhetoric has been the keystone of the economic agenda of President Bush, who declared, during his campaign, that "on principle" no citizen ought to pay more than a third of his income in taxes.

If taxes are inherently bad, tax cutting seems not only sensible but just plain right. This simplifies things: you no longer have to worry much about which taxes to cut. The supply-siders—at least, in theory—were religious about the discouraging effects of marginal taxes. But less than half of Bush's 2001 cut was devoted to such taxes, and his latest plan is studded with provisions that will have no impact on people's incentives to work and invest. If the original supply-side message was that tax cuts are good because they work, the new message seems to be that tax cuts work because they're good.

The righteous disdain for taxation is clearly part of a broader backlash against the government's "greedy hand." It is politically expedient, since lower tax revenues can be used to justify sharp cuts in entitlement programs, whose beneficiaries tend to vote Democratic. And it has become a convenient way of patching up the holes in the economic case for tax cuts. Thanks in part to the supply-siders, the U.S. already has the lowest tax burden of any major industrial country, and marginal tax rates are relatively modest. Cutting tax rates that are so low, most economists believe, creates few incentives. The carrot just isn't big enough. And with the national debt at more than six trillion dollars, and twenty-five trillion dollars in Social Security and Medicare obligations soon coming due, the potential benefits of another big tax cut are simply outweighed by the costs.

The moral argument against taxation has the virtue of being impervious to such trivial considerations. True once, true always, you might say. In the past three years, the President has managed to offer tax cuts as the right response to a booming economy, then to a recessionary economy, and now to a slow-growing economy. Why let a little thing like a war get in the way?

—*James Surowiecki*

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LETTER FROM BAGHDAD

THE COLLAPSE

A regime disappears and chaos ensues.

BY JON LEE ANDERSON

The battle for the Republican Palace complex on Monday, April 7th, the day the first American tanks appeared in the center of Baghdad, had a symphonic quality. Much of it was boom and bang—heavy concussive thumps from tank fire and bombs, the ripping bursts of rockets—but there was also a rhythmic noise, like a huge steel drum being pounded, and, frequently, a great grinding sound. The light clatter of automatic-weapons fire joined in now and then underneath it all. I was watching the battle from the balcony of a room at the Sheraton Hotel, on the east bank of the Tigris, across the river from the palace grounds, which cover hundreds of acres in central Baghdad. Several times, I heard a loud crackling, like metallic popcorn popping—ammunition dumps exploding. F-18 fighter jets, which had replaced the B-52s that had been dropping bombs on Baghdad for two weeks, hit the palace area and screamed off again. The grinding noise was coming from the guns of low-flying A-10 Warthogs, firing four thousand bullets per minute.

Looters in Baghdad on April 9th, the day that most government officials simply vanished. Photograph by Jérôme Sessini.

INVISU/CORBIS

Oil fires had been set on the sandy embankment of the river just opposite the hotel, and by mid-morning black smoke was billowing toward us. Just about then a new dust storm, a *turab*, started up, and the smoke and the dust melded into a yellow haze that obscured the battle, which continued for most of the day. The Minister of Information, Muhammad Said Al Sahaf, gave a surreal press conference in the Palestine Hotel, next door. He claimed that "there are no American infidels in Baghdad," and said that journalists, particularly those from Al Jazeera, were lying about what they saw. He spoke with bonhomie and apparent conviction. I assume he believed that we were not so different from the citizens of Iraq, who had long since lost the ability to call a lie a lie, or to contradict anything they were told by officials. A bus tour for the press corps was organized, and we drove down Sadoun Street, parallel to the Tigris but out of sight of American tanks. The city was pretty much deserted, except for a few fighters here and there, most of them in civilian clothes, with red-and-white checked head scarves. Some of the men carried rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

They flashed us the V sign. The tour lasted only about ten minutes, and I was told that it was to demonstrate that the Ministry of Information hadn't been taken.

Later, when the dust cleared, I could see, through binoculars, an American soldier dangling his legs from the embankment across the river, just in front of two tanks. He gazed at the water, apparently unconcerned about snipers. Another soldier joined him, and they sat there together for a while. Someone shot at the sandy place where Iraqi soldiers had been entrenched earlier in the day, and a fire broke out amid many small explosions. Another ammo dump must have been hit. White sparks and projectiles formed rapid tracers of light and flew off in all directions. Some of them arced high up and out in loops, like fireworks, and landed in the river.

In the middle of the afternoon, my driver, Sabah, said that he would go out and get us some lunch. There were only a couple of restaurants still open in central Baghdad by then, and he decided to go to the Al Saah, a rather garish place in the heart of the Mansour neighborhood, on the west side of the Tigris. A few days earlier, Saddam Hussein had been videotaped walking in the streets of Mansour, high-fiving residents. The clients of the Al Saah are mostly young and upper middle class, but families also go there, as well as military officers. There are usually a few BMWs and a Mercedes or two parked outside. Uday and Qusay, Saddam Hussein's sons, were said to be regulars, although I never saw them there.

Sabah was in the restaurant for about twenty minutes, waiting for our orders of chicken tikka. He paid for the food, then got into his car and drove away. He had gone about half a mile, he said, when there was a tremendous explosion behind him. A bomb had landed next to the Al Saah. He came back to the hotel and picked up me and another journalist, Paul McGeough, of the Sydney *Morning Herald*, and we went to see what had happened. The windows of the Al Saah, and those of the buildings around it, had been blown out. Clods of earth and debris and shards of glass stretched for blocks. The interiors of stores were covered with powder and looked as if they had been hit by a tornado. Several mannequins in a bridal shop lay next to one another in white satin dresses. Down a side street, about a hundred yards from the restaurant, a crowd had gathered in front of a devastated house, its garden heaped with dirt and chunks of brick and mortar and a broken date palm. A pit about thirty-five feet deep and sixty feet across had been opened up in front of the house. The metal headboard of a bed was in the pit, and an advertisement for a billiard table. I asked an Iraqi man what had been there before the explosion. "Four houses," he said.

A wide-eyed middle-aged woman came up to me. In English, she said that her name was Maria Marcos and that she was a secretary at the German Embassy. She lived just down the block. She believed that nine people had died, although only one body had been retrieved so far. A man wept inconsolably in the arms of another man. Three other men sat on a curb, tears streaming down their faces. An F-18 roared overhead, and people ran down the street in fear. A young man who was standing in the trashed garden of the house next to the pit said that his name was Ayad and that the house belonged to his grandfather. He pointed him out to me: an old man in a blood-stained shirt, his head bandaged, who was wandering around on the veranda. Ayad had heard a roar and had seen a yellow missile, about the size of a date palm, crash and explode in a white light. It had hit the house next door, which belonged to Um Salman, a widow who lived there with her two sons and two daughters. They had run a print shop nearby.

Ayad's mother, Neda, invited us into her father's ravaged home. She said that he was seventy-five and was a retired engineer. He had built the house and had lived there for forty-three years. There was rubble everywhere, and the stairs were filled with broken plaster and concrete. Neda showed us around. "I think this is from God," she said. "I think maybe God wants us to suffer this. I am satisfied." I took her to mean that she was thankful that no one in her immediate family had died, and that she bore no hatred to-

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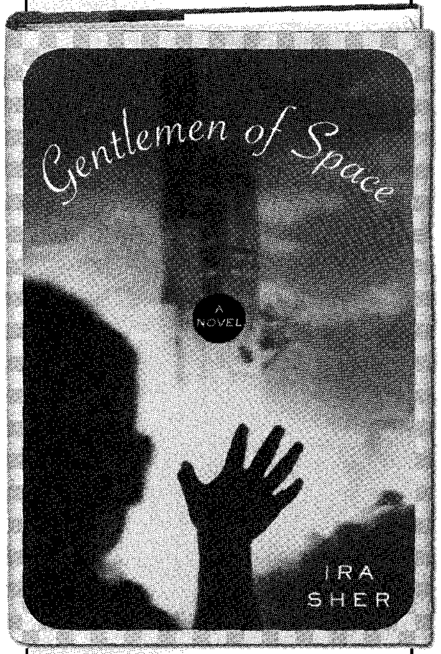

Ira Sher's unforgettable debut novel of suburban angst and the end of the space age is "wondrous... Sher takes us on a Pychonesque odyssey to the moon, passing along the way through memory itself."
—Jenny McPhee, author of *The Center of Things*

"Astounding."
—Nick Flynn, author of *Some Ether* and *Blind Huber*

* *Kirkus Reviews*

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ward anyone for what had happened.

We learned later that Saddam and his sons and other officials were believed to have been meeting there, and that four "bunker buster" bombs had been dropped on the site. There were also reports that Saddam had been having lunch at the Al Saah, but no one seemed to give them much credence, although Sabah told me that he had heard, in the way that Iraqis do, by word of mouth, through friends and neighbors, that Qusay, Saddam's younger son, had eaten lunch in the restaurant the day before.

When I woke up the next morning, a terrific battle was taking place in the palace complex and the nearby neighborhoods. A fireball shot up from the round roof cavity of the Baath Party headquarters, a massive stone building that had been under reconstruction after being destroyed by American and British bombs in 1991 and 1998. There were more blasts near the Al Rashid Hotel, and all up and down the riverbank opposite the Sheraton, between the Jumhuriya Bridge, which crosses the Tigris in front of the palace complex, and the Sinak Bridge, less than a mile north, near the Information Ministry. Everything in that area seemed to be getting bombed, rocketed, strafed, or machine-gunned.

Two Abrams tanks had advanced into the open on the Jumhuriya Bridge. They crouched there like predatory beasts, swivelling their guns to and fro. Bursts of what looked like rocket fire arced into the air toward them, apparently from Iraqi forces. A Warthog looped slowly over the river. On its third or fourth pass, I saw the façade of the Ministry of Planning, a ten-story building, explode into a thousand bursts of white light and flying glass. Then an F-18 appeared, flying low, and bombed a building on the opposite bank. I thought I could hear the sound of helicopter rotor blades.

Someone knocked on my door. It was James, the Sudanese room cleaner. Most hotel services, including laundry and, sometimes, the water and electricity, had been cut off, but James had come to clean my room. He took me to the other side of the hotel, where we looked out a window and saw two Apache gunships circling about five miles away. James said that they were attacking the Al Rashid military garrison, on the east side of town, which has its own airport. I went back to my room and watched the tanks on the bridge, and others hidden behind them, begin a fearsome barrage on the Board of Youth and Sports, one of Uday Hussein's fiefdoms, which was on our side of the river. They seemed to be taking sniper fire from the building, and they fired shells into it, hitting, as far as I could see, most of its floors. They also fired into the edge of the city and the fringe of trees on our side of the bridge. The area around the Al Safeer Hotel, where I used to stay, was hit, as was the riverside block near the street where Karim, my barber, has his little shop.

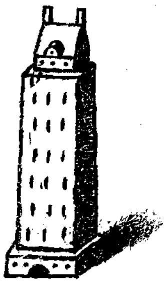
"Be honest, babe—do you still find me rich?"

Someone in the hall yelled that the Palestine had been fired on, and I looked down and saw a crowd of people, mostly journalists, rushing outside. Our elevator wasn't working, so I ran down twelve flights of stairs and over to the Palestine's driveway, which was full of people. The fifteenth floor had been struck by something, no one knew what, and three reporters had been badly wounded. We all milled around in our flak jackets, and then someone else said that the offices of Al Jazeera and of Abu Dhabi television, which were situated in old villas on the opposite bank of the river, between the two bridges where the fighting had been taking place all morning, had also been bombed, and that an Al Jazeera reporter had been killed. A car pulled up, and a friend of mine, a French photographer, Jerome Delay, emerged, sobbing. He had taken a wounded Reuters cameraman, Taras Protsyuk, to the hospital, and Protsyuk had died there. Not long afterward, we learned that the Palestine had been hit by American tank fire. It was claimed that snipers had been firing from the hotel, although the journalists who were living there said that this did not seem to them to be true.

I went with several other reporters to the Al Kindi Hospital, where one of the wounded journalists, José Couso, had been taken. By the time we arrived, he was in the operating room. I had interviewed the head of medical services at the hospital, Dr. Osama Saleh, a few days before, and he recognized me and shook my hand. He said that it was the worst day he had ever spent as a doctor, that even in Iraq's previous wars there had not been injuries on the scale he was now seeing among ordinary civilians. At least a hundred wounded people had been brought in since the morning, and his staff was overwhelmed. Three children had died there that day.

We walked to the morgue, a small building at the rear of the hospital. The concrete pathway was spattered with blood. Several hypodermic needles lay on the ground. Bloody gurneys were parked outside the morgue, and there was a big bloodstain in front of it, along with a clump of black hair. An attendant in filthy clothes was talking to two reporters from Al Jazeera. They had come to identify the body of Tariq Ayoub, the man who had been killed in the attack on the Al Jazeera offices. Ayoub was a Jordanian reporter who had arrived in Baghdad from Amman a couple of days earlier. As a favor, he had brought in some cash for me and several other reporters. His body lay inside with about twenty others in a promiscuous jumble. One of the two Al Jazeera reporters started to talk to me and then began weeping and walked away.

Fifteen or so doctors and nurses were working on patients in adjoining white tiled cubicles with green curtains in the emergency ward. A woman behind one of the curtains was wailing in anguish, and I could hear fists thumping on a wall. Nurses were walking around in tears. A man whose entire body had been burned was lying on a gurney in the corridor, his skin a mass of black and red flesh. His face was covered with bandages. I assumed that he was dead, but then I noticed that he was breathing. A woman who was naked from the waist down and covered with blood was being sponged off by a nurse. As much as the nurse scrubbed, she did not seem to be able to get rid of the blood. The woman's body was a smeared orange color. Two children, a brother and a sister, lay together on a gurney. The girl was bloodied and the boy appeared to be sleeping. A hospital attendant pulled a cloth over their bodies. Their mother was the woman I had heard wailing and hitting the walls. I went outside. The children's father was there, sobbing. Two soldiers rushed up and asked doctors about a friend. Anti-tank rockets stuck out of their backpacks, and they both carried Kalishnikovs. The doctors said that they could come inside if they put their weapons down. They argued about this and then agreed. About ten minutes later, they came out, looking upset and angry, and collected their guns and walked away. Back at the hotel, we heard that José Couso had died. Paul Pasquale, another Reuters journalist who had been injured, was being treated for a severe leg wound. Marines had secured the Al Rashid military garrison and were moving into the city. Another contingent was reported to be coming in from the north. The tanks that had sat all morning on the Jumhuriya Bridge were gone.



There was a cool breeze now, and I sat on the balcony of my hotel room, watching large black long-necked birds wheel around. White terns fluttered near the bulrushes on the Tigris. A hawk, or maybe an eagle, drifted high above. As dusk approached, two F-18s came roaring past and dived repeatedly at the Board of Youth and Sports, sometimes together, sometimes singly. As one of them spiked downward out of the sky, a rocket burst from its pod, plunged into the building, and exploded. The plane lunged upward and away again. There was a sudden *whoosh* from the trees on the riverbank about three hundred yards west of us, just down Abu Nawas Street. It was a heat-seeking missile, and it swooped up in a white vapor trail, chasing the closest American jet. A few seconds later, it disappeared into the clouds. It had missed. The F-18s stayed around for about forty minutes, then flew away. Night fell. A candlelight vigil was being held for the dead journalists on the front lawn of the Palestine Hotel.

The Palestine had been the Information Ministry's headquarters for several days, but on Wednesday morning no officials showed up, just some low-level minders, and they looked lost. We heard that Saddam City, a large workers' slum in northeastern Baghdad, was being looted, and I drove in that direction with some other journalists, on a divided highway full of cars moving erratically, past the Ministry of Oil and the Ministry of Transport, which were being ransacked by men and boys. Smoke was coming out of the Iraqi Olympic Committee headquarters, a modern office building set away from the main road. Uday Hussein was the director of the Olympic committee, and people were said to have been tortured and killed regularly in the building. Uday had a large stable, and his horses were being stolen, too. A boy on a big black Thoroughbred cantered by, bareback. At an overpass near Saddam City, two dozen athletic-looking young marines wearing helmets and flak jackets and holding weapons, their faces covered with dust, emerged from four or five armored personnel carriers. We said hello and explained who we were, and they all said hello back, but kept their eyes on the chaotic traffic, made up almost entirely of looters, which surged up the road in all directions toward Saddam City. The marines had apparently been instructed to bring this to a halt, and two of them went into the road. Drivers honked and stuck their thumbs up and shouted "Bush good!" but, if they didn't stop, the marines crouched down and pointed their rifles at them. The marines were having a hard time getting things under control. A car that had been ordered to stop kept crawling forward, and one of the marines put his gun in firing position and screeched, "Stop your fucking car right now." The car stopped.

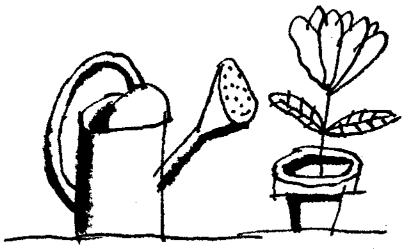
People were waving white flags. Someone leaned out of his car window and ostentatiously tore up a two-hundred-and-fifty-dinar note, embossed with Saddam's portrait. He threw it at the feet of one of the marines, who looked nonplussed. I told him what it was. "Oh, damn," he said. "I was supposed to get one of those as a souvenir for a friend." I told him not to worry, that there were plenty of dinar notes around, and he went back to directing traffic. A boy driving a forklift over which he seemed to have minimal control smiled and made faces at the marines to indicate that he meant no harm. A truck came by pulling a stolen police car, its rear window smashed. Outside the warehouses of the Ministry of Trade, someone had left behind several boxes of sports shoes made in China, and men were trying them on. Most of the boxes contained only one shoe. More marines arrived. They had spray-painted names for each of their tanks and armored personnel carriers on the barrels of their guns: "Assassin," "Carnage," "Cold Steel," "Crazy Train," "Rebel," and one that read, "Got Oil?"

I asked Khifa, my translator, how he felt about what we were seeing. "I am very, very happy," he replied. "But I also feel like I want to cry. This is exactly what happened in 1991, and this is why Saddam was needed afterward. You know why? Because he represented the police station."

We drove back downtown and along Abu Nawas Street. The Al Safeer Hotel's windows had been blown out, but I was gratified to see that it had not been hit in the battle the day before. Near Karim's barbershop, several men were trying to push a brand-new white government-issue Toyota Land Cruiser into a garage. What seemed like the whole neighborhood stood around watching. Some boys on Sadoun Street were carting off rolled-up Persian carpets in a wheelbarrow. The Jumhuriya Bridge was blocked by rubble, and there were some jumpy-seeming boys and young men with guns behind sandbags at the entrance to the Sinak Bridge. We went through a poor district where large numbers of young men lurked in a predatory manner. Sabah was driving, and he became very upset with me, because, he said, in this same place, a couple of hours earlier, a mob had stopped the car of some reporters. They had been beaten, and their equipment, their car, and all their money had been stolen.

We turned left onto one of the colonnaded streets of old Baghdad, trying to find a route into the western part of the city. A man with a limp came up to us and said that the Americans had shot and killed someone who had tried to cross a nearby bridge. He led us to the body of a young man. It was covered with a coarse cloth, and flies were buzzing around it. We heard shots nearby and decided to leave. At a traffic circle that led to another bridge, men in head scarves with automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets made no attempt to stop us. We followed some cars over the bridge and crossed an avenue that led to the Ministry of Justice. About two hundred and fifty yards ahead, we could see the lumbering khaki hulks of American tanks, facing in our direction. A man darted out into the street and waved us back. We turned around quickly, lest the tanks shoot at us, and drove back down the main street leading from the bridge, out of sight of the tanks. We were surrounded almost immediately by a dozen or so men, one of whom said to us that, Saddam or no Saddam, they would fight the Americans. The other men yelled in agreement, and some briefly chanted "Down Bush!" Two men wearing kaffiyehs like head scarves and carrying rocket launchers shouted something and disappeared in the general direction of the American tanks. We turned around and raced back across the bridge. Khifa said that the men were fedayeen, and had yelled "Clear the area," and added that one of the men standing near us had whispered to him, "Get them out of here now."

By the time we got back to the hotel, the marines had arrived, and the approach to the street was blocked by armored personnel carriers. We got out of the car and walked toward them. A man who was standing in a crowd gathered at the side of the road called out to ask us if we were Americans, and when we said yes the whole group began cheering and applauding us, clapping their hands as if they were at a performance in a theatre. Not long afterward, in the traffic circle in front of the hotel, a statue of Saddam Hussein was pulled down by soldiers in an armored personnel carrier.



The next morning, the street leading to the Al Wiya Hospital in central Baghdad was full of looters. They were ransacking several other hospitals in the neighborhood. Al Wiya's head doctor, Ali Walid, told me that several raids had been made on the hospital during the night and that another attempt had been made a few minutes before I arrived. They no longer had a sentry. A young man who worked for him had been throwing rocks at the attackers to keep them at bay. The Al Wiya was the only hospital still functioning in the area. All the others had been plundered. In the lobby, two dead men covered with blankets lay on cots, and three badly injured men were nearby. One of them was the driver of a Red Crescent ambulance. He had been, for some inexplicable reason, shot by marines at a roadblock. The damaged ambulance was parked in front of the main door of the hospital.

Paul Pasquale, the British journalist for Reuters who had been shot at the Palestine, was in one of the wards at the Al Wiya. His face was peppered with shrapnel wounds; bigger wounds on his torso had been stitched up. His legs were heavily bandaged. A couple of his Reuters colleagues were staying with him; they were trying to have him evacuated from Baghdad, but they said that this would take a couple of days. Some wounded Palestinian fighters had shared Pasquale's room during the night, but they were gone, which was a relief to Pasquale, who feared that their presence might precipitate an American raid.

I went back to the Palestine and explained the situation at the Al Wiya to the Marine commander in charge, Lieutenant Colonel McCoy, a big strapping man who listened carefully. I told him that there was a British citizen there, a man who had been wounded when the American tank fired on the hotel. He and a junior officer pulled out a military map of Baghdad and I tried to show them where they should go. It seemed difficult to explain, so Sabah and I and a Frenchman working for Première Urgence, an organization that supplies emergency aid to hospitals, led a convoy of four or five Humvees to the hospital. The looting had intensified in our absence. A truck and a refrigerator nearly blocked one side of the road, and Sabah's car just made it through the gap. The Humvee behind us pushed the refrigerator out of the way. When we arrived at the Al Wiya, the marines got into combat stances facing the hospital. I pointed out that it was the hospital that needed to be protected, and they turned around and took up positions at the entrance gate. The commander of the group, Lieutenant Danner, spoke to Dr. Walid and his staff, and before long everyone had calmed down and the soldiers were securing the perimeter of the building. They promised to stay there for the night. As I left, I heard them say that they had found a live grenade outside the wall.

That afternoon, we drove over to Jadriyah, a residential neighborhood in southern Baghdad, where senior Baathist officials, including Tariq Aziz, have villas. We were looking for a palace complex that Uday Hussein was said to have lived in. Several dozen marines had set up ambushes at a traffic circle, where a large bronze statue of Saddam had been toppled. Nearby, the burned-out carcass of an Iraqi ammunition truck was surrounded by hundreds of rockets, some of which looked as though they had not yet exploded. The side streets had been blocked by residents trying to protect their property, and we left our car and driver on the main road and began walking. The people we met along the way seemed wary, but said hello when we did. The marines at the gates of Uday's compound let us through. Inside there were five neoclassical limestone palaces with domes and ostentatious pillared entrances. Two of them had been heavily bombed, and parts of their roofs had collapsed into slag heaps of debris. All the palaces had ornate fretwork, heavy bronze doorknobs, and carved wood door panels, with ornamental brass and enamel inlay. A crystal chandelier had crashed onto the debris in the foyer of one palace, and was covered with gray dust. The place was swarming with marines, looking around, lying in the flower beds, listening to radios. They had arrived the night before, they said. The word "Texas" was scrawled on the entrance wall of one of the palaces.

The rear garden of another palace had a swimming pool and a stone reproduction of the Venus de Milo. Two snarling porcelain leopards guarded the entrance to the palace next door, which had inlaid marble floors and a white marble staircase that divided in two halfway up. A huge portrait of Saddam with his family hung on the landing. The portrait had been constructed out of colored marble. This palace had a private dental clinic, a mauve-and-pink beauty salon, and huge bathrooms with gilded taps and step-down baths. A carved teak loveseat sat in front of a window with a view of the Tigris. Children's scooters lay on the floor in some of the downstairs reception rooms. In one bedroom, there was a brand-new McCulloch chain saw on a sofa next to the bed, its yellow box on the floor. There were four more chain saws, still in their boxes, in a walk-in closet. A refrigerator in another bedroom was stocked with rows of Clarins Extra-Firming Concentrate, Gentle Night Cream, and Eye Contour Gel; there was also a crate of kiwi fruit and tins of Korean Red Ginseng drink.

We moved on to another palace, where a marine told the photographers not to take pictures of the troops because they were "Intel." A Marine officer was reading a copy of *Playboy* as he defecated into a milk crate. He waved when we passed. Some young marines hanging out around a Humvee festooned with photos from what looked like a perfume ad asked me if I had any news from the war. "We don't have a clue what's going on," one of them said. I told them what I knew; one appeared to be keenly interested, but the others looked bored. A marine who was lying down inside the Humvee asked me whether it was true that Madonna and J.Lo had died together in some accident. Not that I knew of, I said.

As we left the compound, we passed some marines who were sitting on the curb of the palace driveway, consuming Meals Ready-to-Eat and smoking cigars. They waved in a friendly way. "Are those Cuban cigars?" I asked. "From the Man's private stash?" A few of the men smiled and gave me the thumbs-up sign. "Only the best for us," one replied, with a laugh. On the avenue running along the line of riverside villas, thugs in cars, some of them loaded up with loot, cruised by. We heard gunshots here and there. ♦

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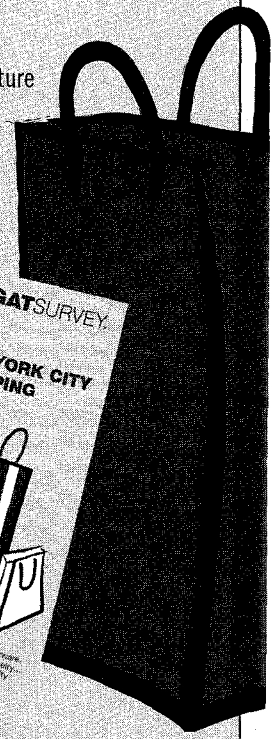
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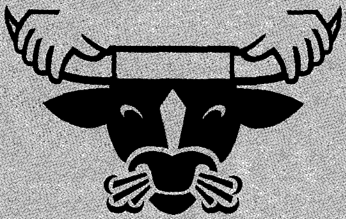

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DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED

The Wal-Martization of the bridal business.

BY REBECCA MEAD

Every year in the United States there are about 2.3 million marriages, and to the members of the North American Bridal Association, a trade organization for bridal retailers and wholesalers, each of those marriages represents evidence of the sovereignty of love in a world generally governed by harsher passions, proof of an urge toward commitment in a short-attention-span culture, and a demonstration of the endurance of traditional family structures. It also represents a marketing opportunity. For every vow exchanged there is, it is hoped, a sweeping gown of satin and tulle to be sold; for every aisle walked, a trailing cloud of veil. Every kiss bestowed at the altar, under the *huppah*, or before the justice of the peace is, potentially, an occasion for the use of a silver-plated wedding-cake knife or a leather-bound guest book or a frilly lace garter threaded with blue ribbon. The average American bride and groom together spend twenty-two thousand dollars on the day that sees them transformed into man and wife, and each new union is filled not just with cordial hope but with the promise of profit.

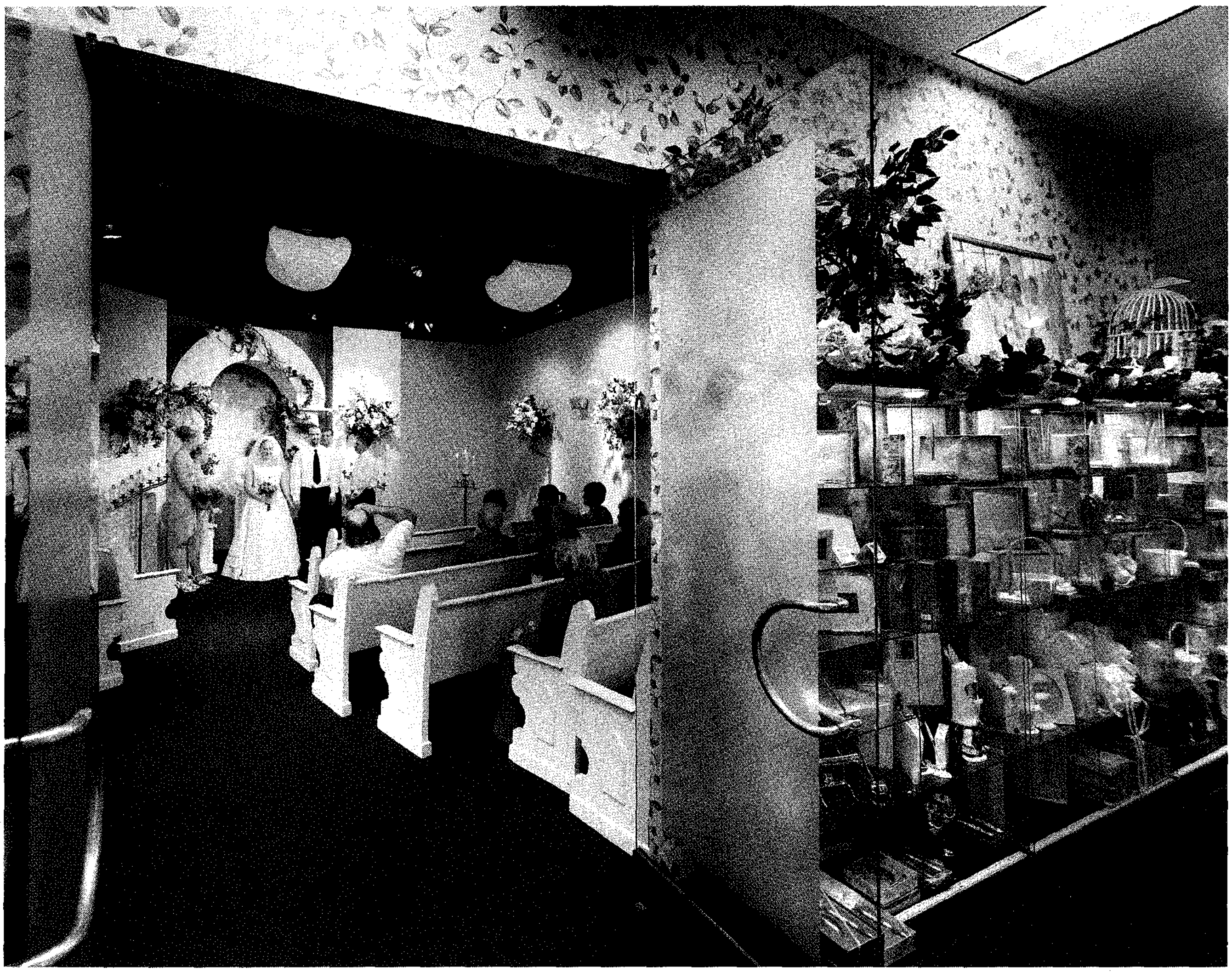
How is a bridal retailer to make the most of that opportunity? This was the question addressed at a seminar entitled "Winning Bridal Strategies," which was held not long ago at a semiannual trade show in Las Vegas, at which bridal-store owners from around the country view the latest in wedding-dress designs, place orders, share gossip, and pick up business-management skills. The bridal market was held at the Tropicana Hotel—one of the less luxurious of the city's resorts, its main attraction being not a scale model of the Eiffel Tower or an indoor replica of the Grand Canal but a ticktacktoe-playing chicken against which a challenger stood to win up to ten thousand dollars. For five days last September, the hotel looked like backstage at a Moonie mass wedding. There was a dizzying range of wedding dresses from designers whose exotic names—Janell Berté, Lorrie Kabala, Aurora D'Paradiso—seemed culled from the register at an expensive international school. In display cases, there were enough tiaras to restore every deposed monarchy in history. The endless amount of product appeared, to the untrained eye, deceptively similar and induced, after a few hours, what bridal-store owners call "white blindness." Retailers, however, could discern important distinctions among gowns when it came to stitching, boning, and the ease with which a wearer would be able to "Y.M.C.A." at her reception.

The seminar featured a Tennessee-based motivational speaker named Chip Eichelberger, whose résumé noted that he got his start in the business by working for Anthony Robbins, the best-selling author of "Awaken the Giant Within." "I am excited to be here, and I am challenged to be here," Eichelberger announced, as he bounded to the front of the hotel conference room. He kicked things off by asking the members of the audience—who were, as is typical for the wedding-retail business, mostly women in their middle years—to give their nearest neighbor a back rub. Next, he launched into a peppy exhortation filled with attention-getting, counter-intuitive statements.

"People say you should satisfy the customer, but setting out to satisfy the bride is a losing game," he said. The bridal-store owners, who had paid $199 each to listen to Eichelberger, looked puzzled. "Satisfaction is mediocrity. If you set the bar at satisfaction, some people on your team will set out to satisfy. You have to set up a system to exceed expectations. You've got to think, How can I provide a better experience for the bride?" The store owners scribbled down his words. He explained some of the rudiments of salesmanship, and how they applied to the bridal business. "Some salespeople start at the lower end instead of at the high end," he said. "If you get them excited about the three-hundred-dollar dress, it's hard to get them excited about the thousand-dollar dress." A bride's anxiety—about her dress, about her mother-in-law, about the man she's marrying—should be greeted as providing an opening for the self-assured salesperson. "A lot of people are scared going into marriage, and if you can transfer your certainty, that's good for you," Eichelberger said. Stores should send e-mails to brides who came to browse but have yet to buy—"There's a difference between being pushy and following up," he said—and they should consider traditional seduction techniques. "After every weekend is over, hire some kid with a bike for eight dollars an hour and have him ride around and deliver a single rose to everyone who placed an order," Eichelberger went on. "There's nothing wrong with inducing a little reciprocation, if it's done elegantly. I would wager that's why a lot of brides buy from a salon: because the consultant spent so much time with them. You have to help them buy what they really want, not what they need."

Most of all, he urged, consultants shouldn't let what he called the " 'Oh, Mommy' moment" pass them by. "When the bride comes out of the dressing room and looks at herself in the mirror and says, 'Oh, Mommy,' you need to say, 'Let's write it up,' " Eichelberger said. "You owe it to them. Do they really want to go to nine other appointments at nine other stores? Of course, they don't. You're cheating them if you don't say it." Eichelberger also suggested that retailers should work on themselves. "The best gift you can give your family and your brides is your own personal growth," he said. Store owners should involve their employees in bonding rituals, beginning each day with a football huddle and a declared commitment to go out and do serious business. "Motion creates emotion!" Eichelberger said, and told everyone to stand up and punch her hand in the air and say "Yes!"—at which seventy ladies with blow-dried hair stood up and punched seventy manicured fists skyward.

The wedding industry, like the funeral industry, is something most ordinary people don't think about until it's too late not to. Just as with a funeral, preparing for a wedding is an emotionally charged journey into an unfamiliar territory of arcane practices, all of which appear to be the intimidating preserve of experts and specialists. The bride-to-be, whose initial ignorance of what her nuptial role entails is matched only by her anxiety that she play it to perfection, is one of the most assiduously



The amount that is spent on weddings each year exceeds McDonald's national revenue. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

courted customers in America, where, according to a recent survey by the Condé Nast Bridal Group, the wedding business is worth nearly forty billion dollars a year. That figure includes expenditure not just on long white dresses but on all the accoutrements of the wedding: the catering services and floral arrangements and officiants' fees and rental of banquet halls just large enough to seat all the couple's parents' friends but not quite large enough to fit in most of their own. If you add the national outlay on honeymoons and gifts, wedding-related expenditure comes to fifty billion dollars a year. Bridal-industry sources like to point out that the amount that is spent on weddings is more than the national revenues of McDonald's and PepsiCo; it is also far greater than the gross domestic product of, for example, the Bahamas ($5 billion) or Aruba ($2 billion), or of many other island nations to whose beaches the newlyweds are likely to repair after the ceremony is over.

The size and reach of the American wedding industry belies the fact that the bridal business is what Gary Wright, the head of an industry association called the National Bridal Service, describes as "the purest example of an inelastic market." The number of weddings taking place annually has remained static for the past two decades, which troubles bridal retailers. As Wright puts it, "No one yet has found a way to increase the demand. No one ever says, 'This is a great time to get married—the bridal store is having a sale.' " Similarly unnerving to the bridal industry is the changing demographics of marriage. Brides are getting older and are more likely to have been married before, both of which, it is feared, make them less susceptible to the allures of traditional bridal trappings: the "Oh, Mommy" moment may not have quite the same impact when the bride herself is already a mommy.

There are other problems facing the country's three thousand independent bridal retailers, who cling proudly to their mom-and-pop status, even though the stores are usually run only by mom—who, having married off her own daughter, thinks it might be fun to marry off other people's—while pop keeps well out of the way. The biggest threat is presented by a chain store called David's Bridal, which has been greeted by independents with all the enthusiasm shown by small booksellers toward Barnes & Noble or by general stores toward Wal-Mart. David's has a hundred and eighty-one locations around the country and is expanding rapidly: already, twenty per cent of all American bridal gowns are purchased at David's. The chain, which is owned by the May Department Stores Company, is the first store to sell wedding dresses in the manner of mass-market ready-to-wear clothing. Although many independent bridal stores do stock some off-the-rack dresses, the traditional method of buying a wedding dress has required the bride to try on the store's sample gowns and place an order for a new dress, which can take as long as six months to be delivered by the manufacturer and will require alterations at additional cost. David's dresses can be bought in sizes 2 through 26, and retail for an average of about five hundred dollars.

Many independent retailers have decided that their only hope for survival is to emphasize their specialized knowledge, and to persuade each bride-to-be that dressing herself for her wedding is a project that she is about as well equipped to undertake as she is to remove her own appendix. *Vows*, the trade magazine for bridal retailers, regularly features articles suggesting how such persuasion might be effected. "Pay attention to the verbal and nonverbal clues the wedding party gives," Steve Lang, the president of Mon Cheri Bridals, advises in an article entitled "Seven Steps to Closing a Sale." "You are like a doctor watching vital signs. You adjust the use of selling tools and approach as a doctor would change treatments based on patient response." The undecided bride should be urged to leave a twenty-five-dollar refundable deposit so that the retailer can "continue to research the dress you love" until she returns to the store, because, as Lang points out, "taking money is a much more intimate relationship than just giving a business card to someone."

The average American bride spends eight hundred dollars on her dress, though many gowns retail for thousands, such as those by the designer Vera Wang, who claims to create three new shades of white for every new collection, a feat deserving of a Nobel Prize in Physics. After a bride has been sold on a dress, a retailer should press for further sales: a rule of thumb is that whatever a bride has paid for her dress she should spend over again on shoes, undergarments, jewelry, and other fripperies. The necessity of cumbersome accessories should be explained to the bride, even as she sensibly resists their suggestion. "The most common reason brides don't buy a purse is because they don't want to carry it around on their wedding day," one bridal retailer told *Vows*. "Admittedly, this is a difficult objection to combat, but you still need

THE LANDING

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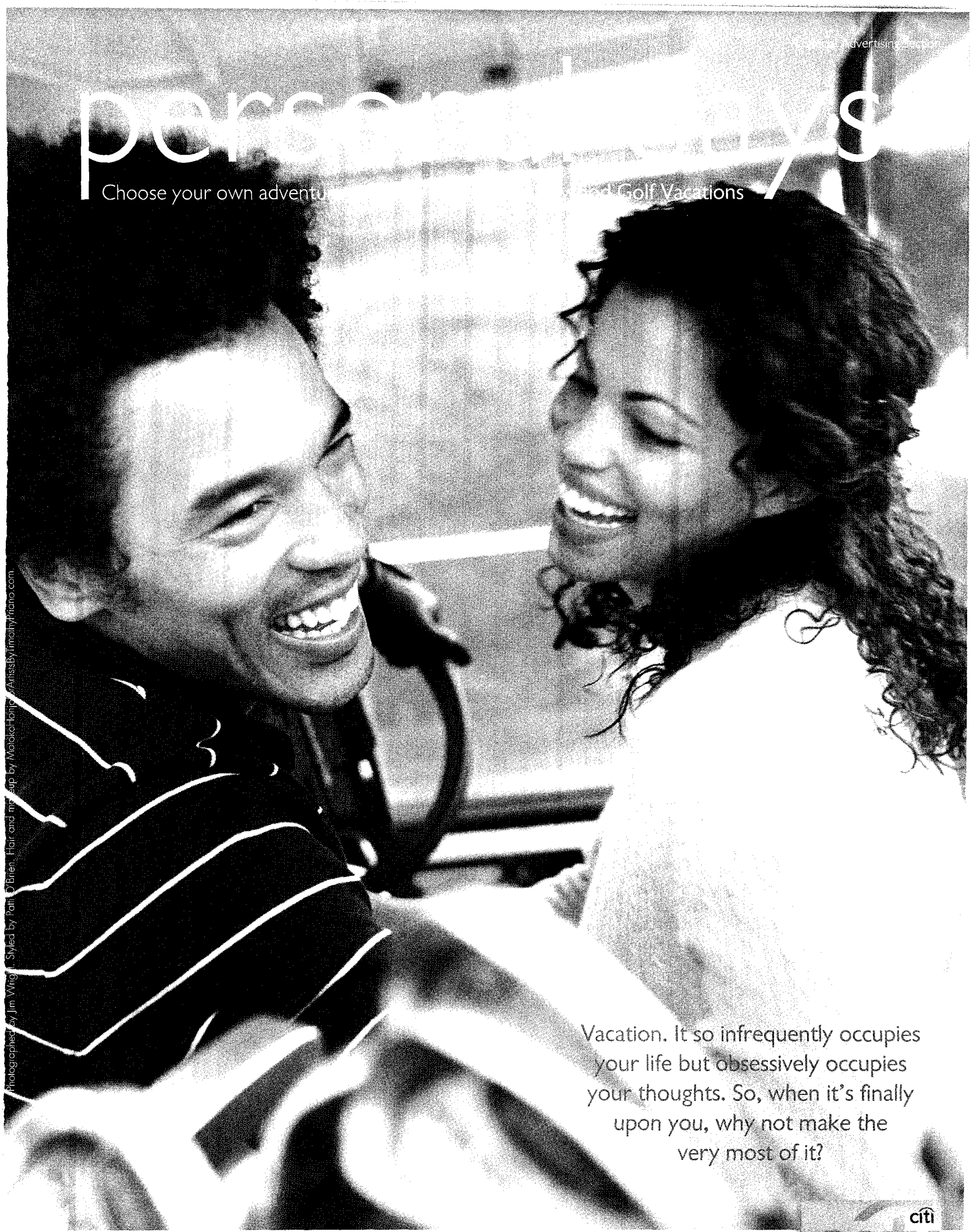
the tank exonerating itself from the carrier
easily mistaken for a truck
offloading blankets and medicine,
the truck so easily mistaken for the divan
on which we've made another hand-over-fist
attempt to cover our asses
and leave some wiggle room.
A full moon, wee one. The squid flutters its eyelid.
It shines a beam on the seabed to cancel its own shadow.

—*Paul Muldoon*



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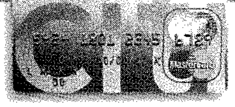

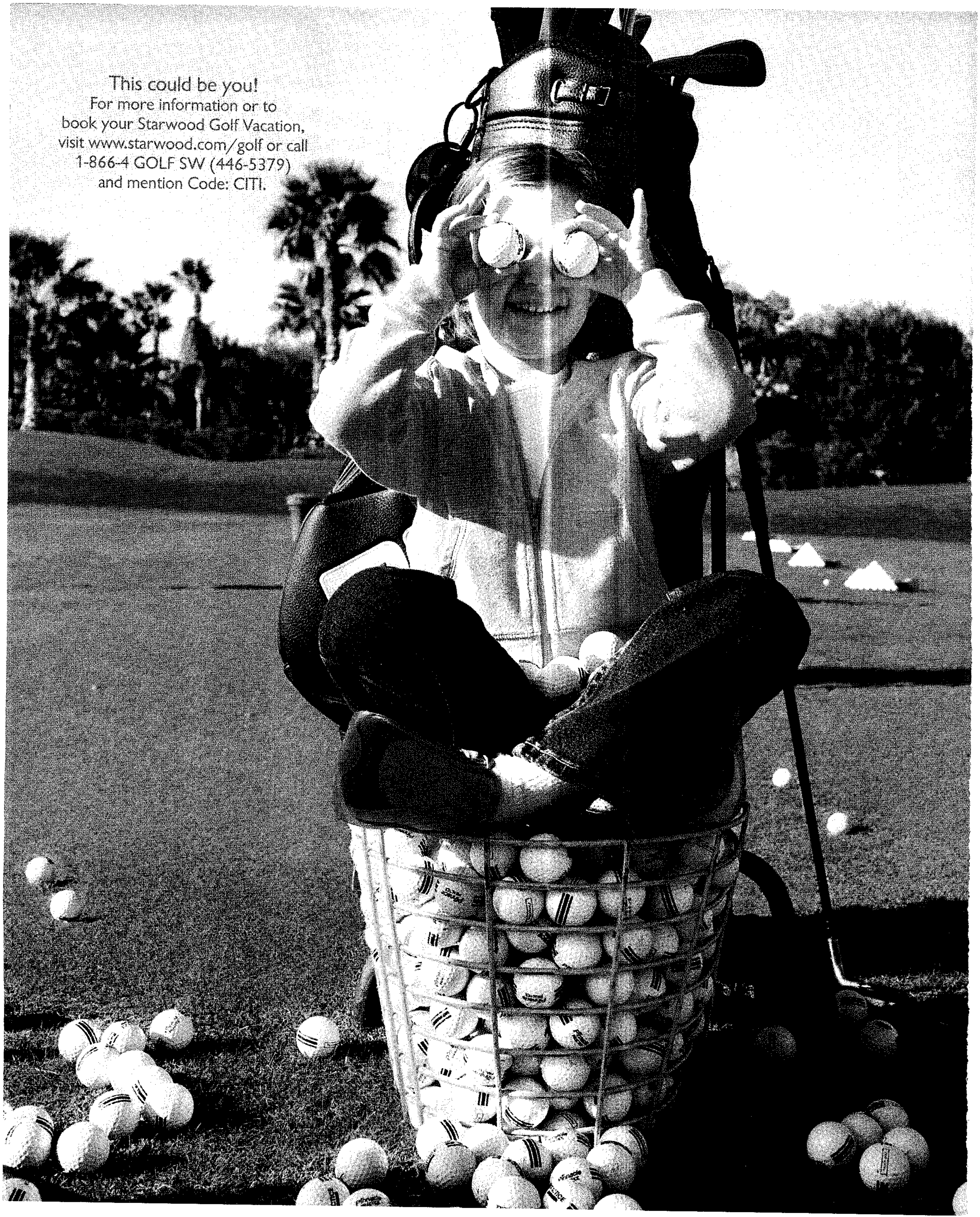

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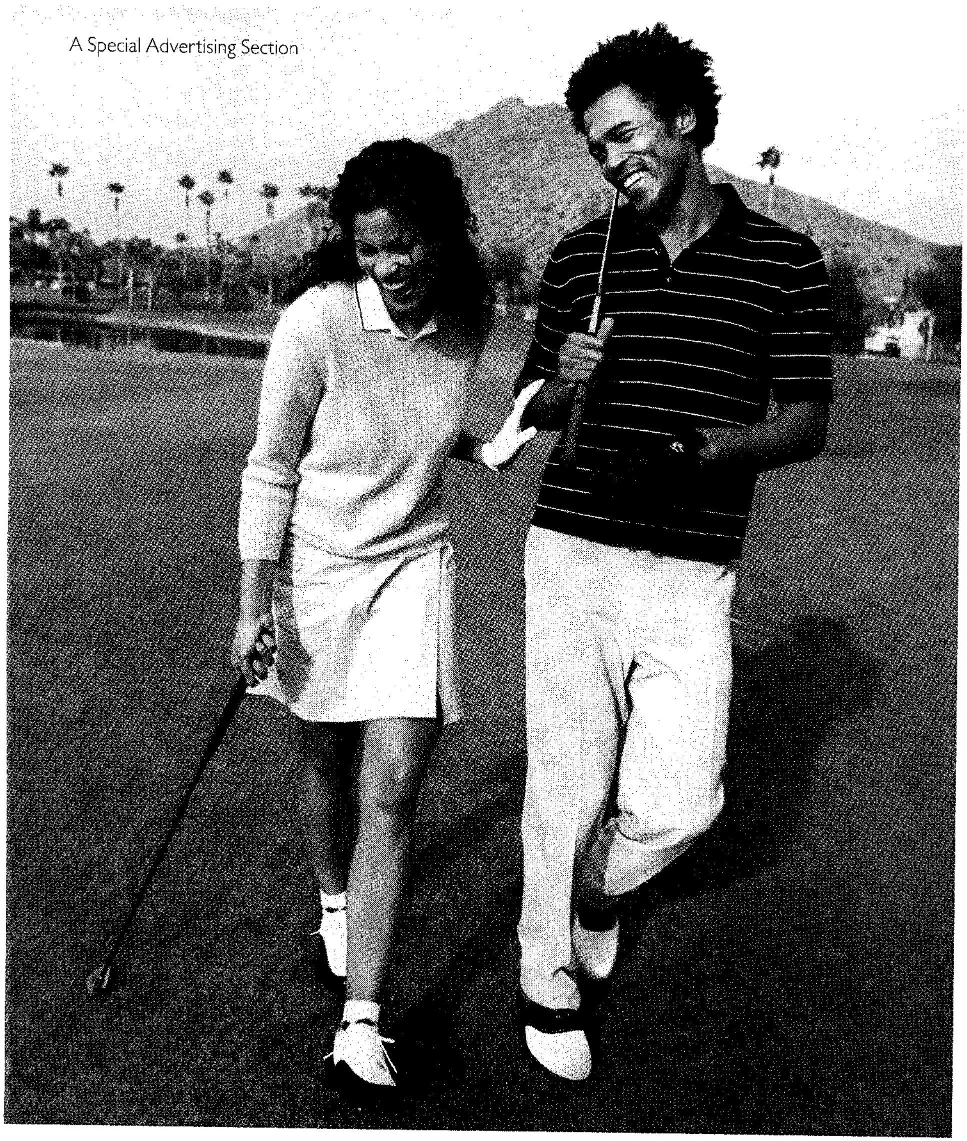

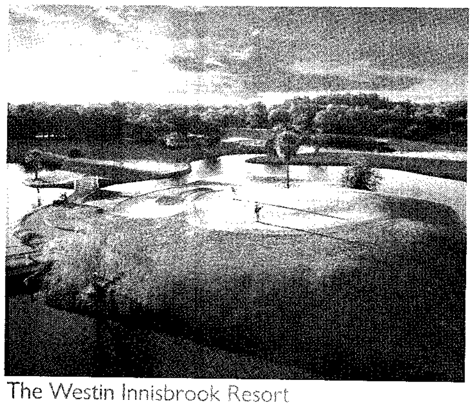

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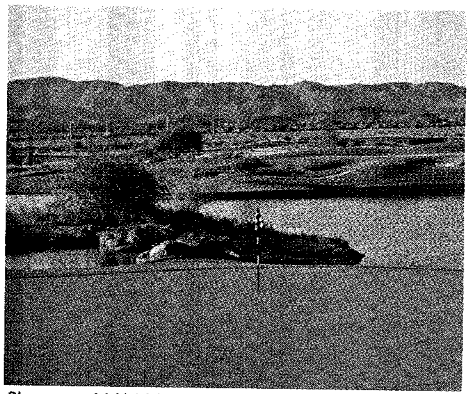

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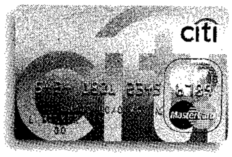

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to try." Long white gloves should be advocated, even though they present an obstruction to the crucial symbolic moment of marrying. The suggested solution: a left-hand glove slit at the fourth finger, so that a groom can put the ring on his bride without messing up her look.

The romance that the retailer is most interested in promoting is not the one between bride and groom but that between bride and gown. Kleinfeld, the wedding-dress retail store in Brooklyn, greets women who make an appointment with a letter that announces, "We believe the day you choose your wedding gown should be as joyful and memorable as the day you wear it."

One evening last fall, hundreds of young women attended a Bridal Expo at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Times Square. After standing in long lines to enter, they swarmed the scores of booths that were occupied by dress venders, linen and tableware companies, jewellers, tuxedo- and limousine-rental companies, and representatives of every imaginable division of the bridal business. The highlight of the evening was a catwalk show of bridal fashions. But, before the show began, a mistress of ceremonies poked fun at the few sheepish-looking men who had dared to attend. "Have you noticed how, from the minute you put that ring on her finger, your fiancée starts suffering from P.M.S.?" she said. "I mean premarital syndrome. She has lost all interest in things that aren't to do with her wedding day. You've got to understand: She already had the dress picked out, she had the church picked out, she had the music picked out. You were the last element she picked out."

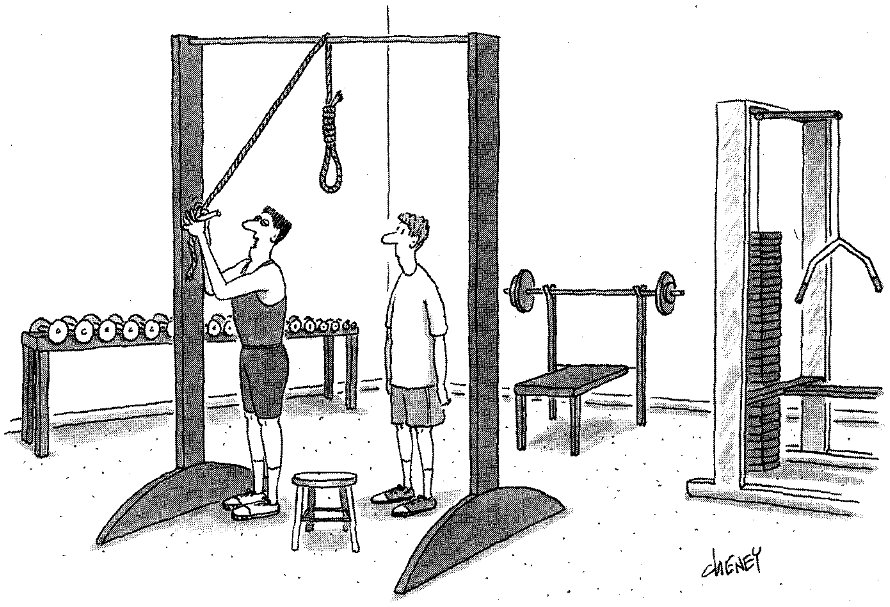
The contemporary conception of the betrothal period as an extended occasion for retail consumption and elaborate event production is a boon for wedding professionals, among whose gloomier number are those who have feared that the traditional American wedding may be going the way of the traditional American nuclear family. Happily, the opposite seems to be true. Apart from a brief, alarming moment in the nineteen-seventies when dress manufacturers stooped to the demands of hippie brides by offering bridal blouses rather than dresses, weddings have only got bigger and grander, as if the extravagance of the ceremony might keep at bay the hobgoblin of divorce statistics.

However, the bride who approaches her engagement with the fervor of a war planner combined with the giddiness of an Oscar winner is, for the bridal professional, not just an opportunity but a liability. "Brides don't want the fun to end," says Barbara Barrett, the owner of the Bridal Mall, in Niantic, Connecticut, her voice heavy with weariness. When Barrett opened the store, in 1993, her typical customer came in for an average of two visits before she bought her dress. Nowadays, a bride averages five visits before settling on a gown.

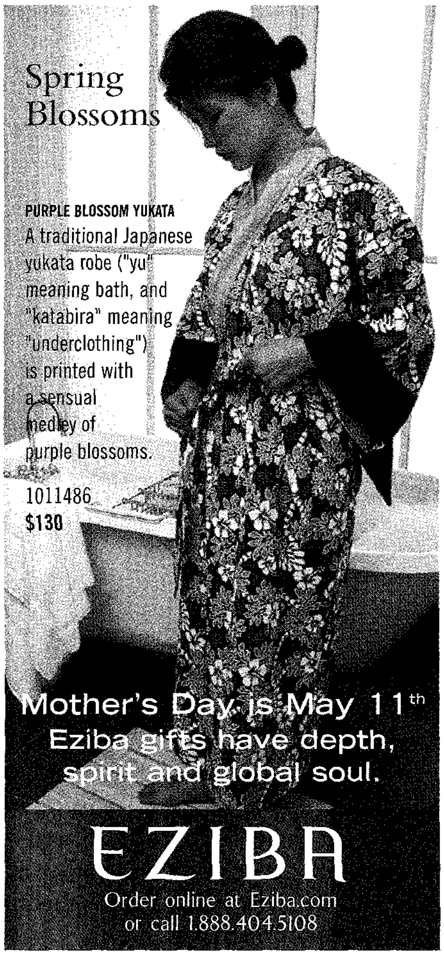
The Bridal Mall is the largest bridal store in Connecticut, where brides-to-be can choose among about eight hundred different styles of wedding gowns—from enormous, pouffy productions that weigh twenty pounds and look like bead-encrusted pup tents to flimsy slips with spaghetti straps and layers of chiffon that seem less suited to the altar than to the honeymoon suite. Barrett doesn't just sell wedding dresses: her brides can also order engraved invitations, multitiered cakes, and floral arrangements; they can outfit bridesmaids and, from the tuxedo-rental department, intended spouses and their attendants. Barrett also provides, for a fee, services such as pre-ceremony gown storage, with visitation rights included: on busy weekend afternoons, the Bridal Mall looks like a petting zoo, filled with brides-to-be and their friends and relatives, all cooing over the tulle.

For Barrett, as for any bridal-store owner, part of the job's reward is the intangible joy of sending a happy bride into her marital life. Yet the structure of the bridal industry conspires to frustrate both bride and retailer; while they appear to be collaborating on a grand romantic project, their economic interests are very different. The bride is afraid that her naïveté will be exploited; the retailer is on guard against the bride who is shopping but isn't buying. A cycle of resentment can easily be established, which, though it is usually masked by the air of sentimentality that thickens the oxygen in a bridal store, sometimes breaks out into real hostilities. Not long ago, one of the Bridal Mall's customers flung an unwanted garter at Barrett after being reminded of the store's no-returns policy; and last summer Barrett was sued in small-claims court by a bride who contended that the fit of her dress had restricted her ability to dance at her wedding reception, twelve months earlier, a trauma that had persisted throughout her first year of marriage.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, a steady flow of brides arrived at the Bridal Mall. First-time visitors were asked to fill out a form including the date of the wedding: a bride without a date is instantly suspect, since she may well also lack a fiancé. Brides are also discreetly asked about their dress budget. More affluent customers are steered to the "couture room," which is spacious



"All righty, then, let's move on to the neck muscles."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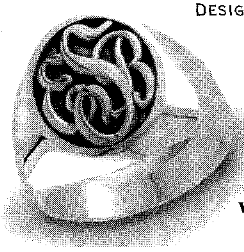
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and painted purple and furnished with a sofa and chairs and soft lighting and plates of butter cookies, and where the cheapest gown costs twenty-five hundred dollars. On this particular day, Barrett had one customer for the couture room, a twenty-seven-year-old attorney from New Haven who, on an earlier visit, had found a dress she favored and had returned for a second look with her punkish younger sister (and future bridesmaid), who had black-and-blond-dyed hair. The bride's choice was an enormous gown that looked as if it might have been designed by a cartoonist for Disney: it had a scalloped neckline and a crinoline so wide it would have been sufficient to support a parachute jump. It cost $2,899. "This is the only time in my life I'll be able to wear a big dress," the bride-to-be said. "And this is going to sound gay, but when I was a kid I loved the dresses on 'Gone with the Wind' so much."

Brides with fewer resources are directed to the main salon, where dresses cost from $299 to $1,499. A hang tag is attached to each dress, showing three levels of pricing, depending on whether the bride chooses gown storage or post-wedding preservation services; also attached is a booklet of coupons with discounts on items such as cake toppers and toasting glasses. One function of the different pricing levels is to confuse the bride who is bent on comparison shopping. Barbara Barrett cuts the manufacturers' labels out of the dresses in the main salon, and won't tell a bride who designed her chosen dress until she has paid for it. She also does not permit cameras or video recorders in the store. "We've had people videotaping through their purses," Barrett says. "Like they were from '60 Minutes,' " Barrett's husband, Chris, adds.

Such tactics are intended to discourage brides from using Barrett's as a dressing room before taking their business to a competing store or buying a dress online. "Brides used to come in with their mothers, and their attitude about the bridal consultant was 'This lady is going to help us have the most beautiful wedding, because she is a professional,' " Barrett said. "Now they come in and they're, like, 'Look, lady, I've been on the Internet, and don't tell me you can't go lower than six hundred and nineteen dollars on this dress, because I know you didn't pay that much for it.' This is a scary person to deal with." But because of the chain-store alternative offered by David's Bridal—there are four branches in the geographical area that Barrett serves—Barrett cannot afford to treat her more difficult customers with the sternness she thinks they deserve. Barrett's animus against David's is so strong that she will not allow a garment bag bearing the store's name to enter her shop, even if the bride carrying it is prepared to spend cash on a veil-and-tiara ensemble. "Store owners weren't so down and dirty ten years ago, because there was plenty of business for everyone," Barrett says, bitterly. "It has ceased being a ladies' business."

As happens every weekend, there were, on this occasion, some crises: the bride whose wedding was two weeks off and had been provided with a bridesmaid's dress that was too small (Barrett said they would alter the dress to fit); the first-time visitor who, having undressed in the changing room, informed her consultant that she had no intention of wearing a bra, now or at the ceremony. (Barrett instructed the flustered young consultant to tell the customer that bras are required while trying on gowns, "for health reasons.") There was a cancellation from a girl who had been in five times already to try on gowns, each time with a different set of friends. There was a young bride who, having tried on a Maggie Sottero gown with a beaded bodice and a lace-up back, had been "loaded up," in the parlance of the store, with a cathedral-length veil, chunky-heeled shoes, and a tiara. (Barrett sells between three and five silver-plated crystal tiaras a week, at an average of $249 each. "This is the piece that pays the bills," she says.) The young bride's mother, sister, and cousin all urged her to say yes to the dress, even though her wedding was still sixteen months away. There were lighthearted moments, too, such as the bride who made her selection with the help of two friends armed with paddles marked 1 through 10, like judges at a skating contest. Whenever a sales consultant closed a deal with a bride, she rushed out of the dressing area toward the other consultants clustered at the checkout counter, holding up three fingers above her head in the shape of a

W, for "win." A failed sales pitch would end in a sorry L-shaped hand gesture, for "lose."

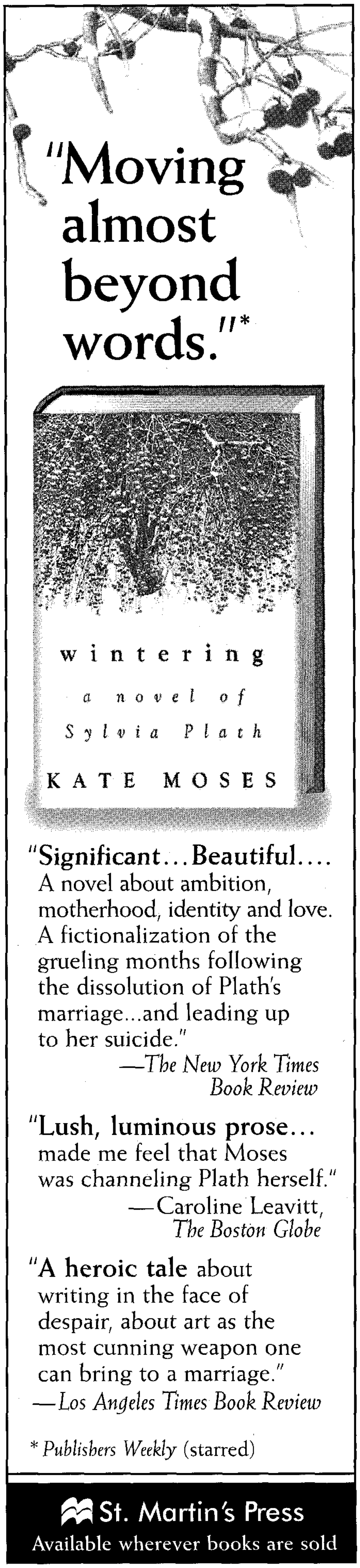
There was, thankfully, more than one "Oh, Mommy" moment. One customer was a twenty-eight-year-old music teacher who arrived at the store with her mother and sister, needing a dress in a hurry. She'd been engaged for just a week, and the wedding was planned for June, only three and a half months away. The groom was thirty-nine, and also a teacher. "He told the priest who's going to marry them, 'I'm not afraid of commitment. I'm afraid of divorce,'" the mother-in-law-to-be said, solemnly. The bride, her dark hair piled on top of her head and a string of pearls around her neck, tried on six dresses, the last of which had a scooped, off-the-shoulder neckline, a tight bodice, and a full skirt, and was decorated with white lace flowers. She perched on a footstool provided so that a bride who isn't Julia Roberts's height can get some idea of what she'll look like when she's in her own gown rather than a sample, and gazed at herself in the wall-size mirrors.

"This is my dress," she said dreamily, smoothing the skirt repeatedly with her hands, while her damp-eyed mother looked on. The bride said she was thinking of her fiancé. "I am seeing him in my mind and picturing his reaction," she said. "This is the one that will make him forget to breathe."

The big white dress was firmly established as proper bridal wear in the United States by the end of the nineteenth century. Though brides had worn white in earlier eras, it was Queen Victoria's choice of a white silk-and-lace gown with an eighteen-foot train for her wedding to Prince Albert, in 1840, that confirmed the necessity of the costume. The notion that every woman in the American Republic should look, on her wedding day, like a member of European royalty is the principle upon which David's Bridal was founded. "We basically serve the masses at David's Bridal," explains Robert Huth, David's C.E.O., who is based at David's headquarters, in Conshohocken, just outside Philadelphia. The company occupies a handsomely renovated foundry building with stripped beams and exposed-brick walls, a fancy cafeteria, a staff gymnasium, and cubicles and conference rooms whose calm hum is indistinguishable from that of a prosperous insurance office. "In many cases, this is the most expensive apparel purchase our customer has made to date," Huth says. "It may be the most expensive she will ever make. She wants to feel special. She is living her dream, in many ways."

David's Bridal was conceived by Phil Youtie, who, in the nineteen-seventies, was the owner of a small chain of traditional bridal stores in Florida, and one of the relatively few men in the business. (The original David was one David Reisberg, who sold Youtie his first bridal store.) In 1990, Youtie joined forces with his best friend from high school, a financier named Steven Erlbaum, to open a wedding-dress outlet store in a warehouse on I-95 outside Hallandale, Florida. Youtie and Erlbaum sold off-price merchandise at a deep discount, and the only frills were the ones on the dresses. "We did no alterations, and if anyone needed a bobby pin we would charge them for it," Youtie explained recently. Within a year, David's Bridal was buying all its dresses directly from manufacturers in Taiwan, where most American wedding dresses originated then. These days, David's dresses are made not only in China but in Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, where the company established its own factory a few years ago. "The factory has to be spotless and air-conditioned, because you can't have people perspiring all over white garments," Youtie explains. "Everyone looks like scrub-room nurses, and when we first opened in Sri Lanka the workers kept catching colds because they weren't used to the air-conditioning."

The market of brides who were pleased to have an alternative to the rounds of appointments and ordering and alterations offered by the traditional bridal salons allowed David's to expand dramatically over the next decade, and in 1999 Youtie and Erlbaum took their company public for more than a hun-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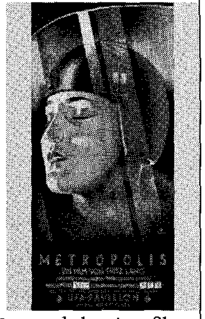

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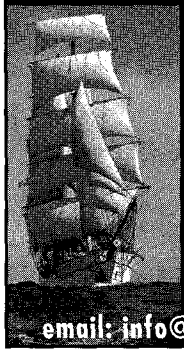

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dred million dollars. A year later, David's was bought by the May Department Stores Company for four hundred and thirty-six million dollars; the company plans to open about thirty more stores a year for the next five years.

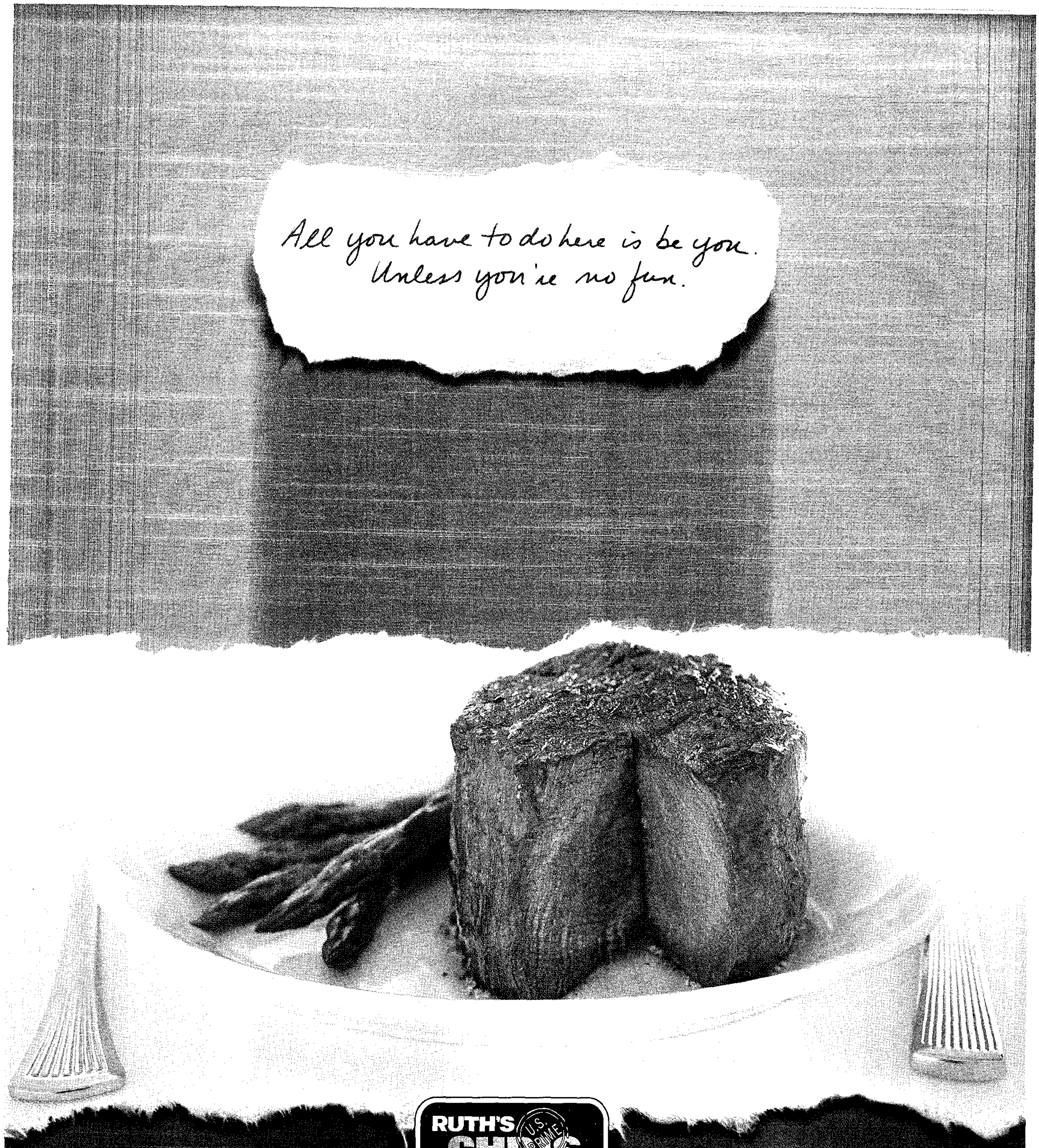
Under May's direction, David's has continued an evolution away from its original, bargain-basement image: the new stores are decorated in peach and sage green, and have the bland conformity of an Ann Taylor store. Some special-order dresses bearing the name of the designer Oleg Cassini have been introduced, but the company's primary appeal remains to the budget bride, with her customary tolerance for the rustle of polyester, the scratch of nylon lace, and the sparkle of plastic beading.

The democratization of princessdom promised by David's has, predictably, a substantial business rationale for the May Company, whose C.E.O., Gene Kahn, intends to build the largest bridal business in the country. After buying David's, the May Company purchased Priscilla's of Boston, a high-end company with a chain of ten stores and a good, if languishing, reputation (the company's last big moment was dressing Tricia Nixon for her White House wedding); a tuxedo-rental chain; and a five-million-dollar stake in the bridal Web site The Knot. Information about every David's bride is gathered and tabulated, so that the company's anticipation of bridal needs can be more precisely refined. "Tuxedos generally get bought five to six months after the wedding gown; bridesmaids' dresses, three to four months," says Gary Schwartz, the senior vice-president of marketing for David's. With these data, David's is able to send e-mail reminders to its brides at the appropriate moment, advising them of special offers and urging them to return to the store. "The May Company said, 'Hey, you know what? There are opportunities to influence and generate income from other aspects of the wedding-planning process,' " Schwartz says.

The May Company's intention is not simply to dominate the bridal business. "They bought us for two very solid reasons," Huth says. "One is our ability to grow and be profitable and be a major contributor in our own right. The other is to give them an entrée to a younger customer who is forming a household and needs many of the products they offer." The bride is, in effect, a loss leader for May's bridal registry, which is promoted to David's brides by means of discount coupons and advertising. A David's bride is thus a means by which the department store can tap into her guest list, a much larger pool of potential customers for its cookware and appliances. "The number of brides they can put through our door is a lead generator for all the processes after," as Gary Schwartz puts it. According to the Condé Nast Bridal Group wedding survey, the average American engagement lasts sixteen months, and during this time couples shop for four billion dollars' worth of furniture, three billion dollars' worth of housewares, and four hundred million dollars' worth of tableware. While the bride's fling with a David's store amounts to a brief and heady romance, the May Company is hoping for a retail relationship till death does them part.

Faced with such competition, independent bridal-store owners have been obliged to be imaginative about new marketing possibilities. In particular, they are looking for ways to appeal to the so-called nontraditional bride: divorced brides, older brides, and brides with offspring. To the independent retailer, such customers present a challenge, but one that should be greeted enthusiastically. *Vows*' tipoffs for recognizing the nontraditional bride included the fact that "these women won't change their wedding dates to accommodate dress orders," and they are dangerously apt "to forget the wedding and prepare for marriage."

Bridal specialists have a vested interest in the high incidence of both marriage and divorce, and speak of their returning brides with an exasperated fondness, like an indulgent parent. In the past, a second-time or third-time bride would generally have a low-key ceremony to inaugurate a new marriage, but such modesty has fallen out of fashion, much to the relief of the industry. Cami Hester, a bridal-store owner in Melbourne, Florida, and a frequent contributor to Bridalindustry.com, a bulletin board for the trade, says, "We have one bride we have done seven wed-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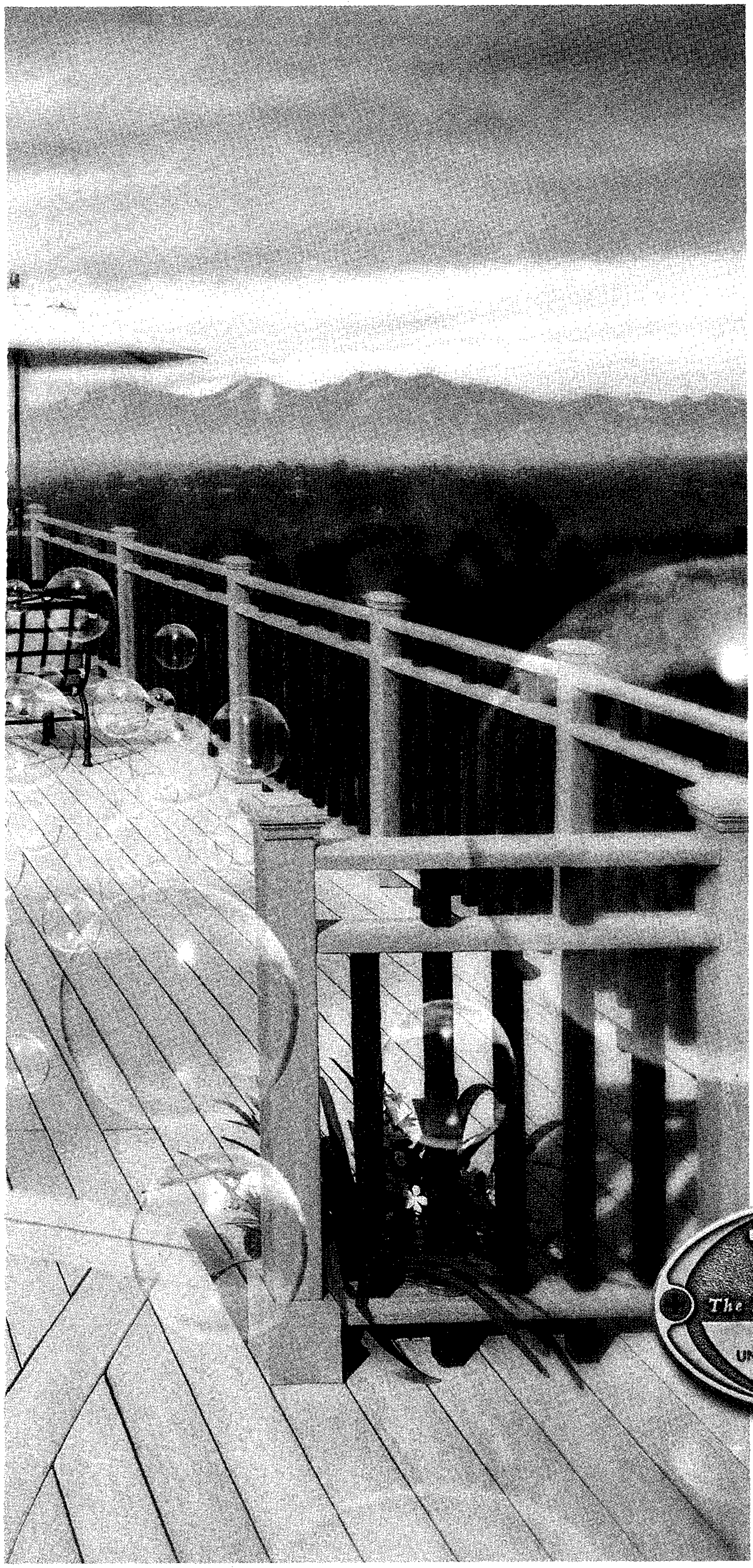

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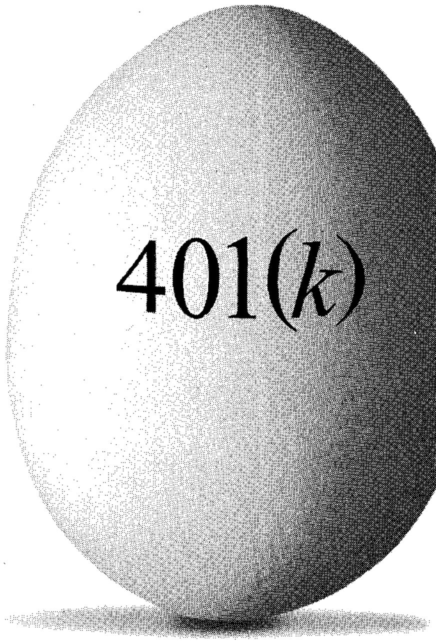

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dings for already, and every time, the dress gets whiter and the train gets longer."

The bridal industry has taken to promoting the idea that you don't even have to be divorced to enjoy a splashy second wedding. The emerging phenomenon of vow renewal is, potentially, a hopeful sign for retailers, though it should be admitted that, so far, the trend seems largely to exist in the minds of marketing executives at resort hotels, such as the Don Cesar, in St. Petersburg, Florida, which last year hosted a mass renewal of vows on the beach at sunset for two hundred couples and reporters from the St. Petersburg *Times* and the Tampa *Tribune.*

Still, bridal retailers know that such events are rare, and that they would be wise to concentrate on actually sending women to the altar to undergo a legally binding ceremony, not least because a satisfied customer may one day be legally unbound. Retailers are aware of the need to keep in mind the question posed in a recent issue of *Vows:* "Are you reaching the future remarriage market by serving the current generation's brides well?"

On the last evening of the Las Vegas Bridal Market, industry members came together to celebrate a specially orchestrated wedding. Because the market coincided with the first anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks, its chairman, Randy Friedman, of the North American Bridal Association, had decided that a fitting way to commemorate the day would be to donate an entire wedding to a Las Vegas firefighter and his bride. Last May, the name of Ken Teeters, Jr., a thirty-five-year-old member of the Las Vegas Fire Department, was drawn out of a firefighter's boot. His fiancée was Destiny Esposito, a thirty-three-year-old editor with the film-advertising company the Ant Farm.

Ken and Destiny were, in many ways, a couple who had made do quite well without marriage or a wedding. They had been dating on and off for fifteen years, and were in the midst of renovating a house they had recently bought together. "I don't think either of us has quite figured out why we didn't get married before," Ken, who is tall and ruddy, said at the wedding rehearsal, as he affably accepted the beers with which his friends kept supplying him. "Hopefully, it won't make any difference to us, being married, because everything works real well as it is. It's really just a piece of paper." Destiny, who has long blond hair and an athletic grace, said, "We've been together forever. We've been engaged a few times, and we've had to put it on hold. But winning this wedding gave us the push we needed."

On the evening of the wedding, a hundred and fifty of Ken and Destiny's friends and relatives gathered on rows of white seats on one side of the Tropicana's large, irregularly shaped pool, while the bridal conventioneers massed on the farther bank, looking on. As dusk fell, a bridal march was struck up on the sound system, and Destiny's five bridesmaids, in dresses provided by Mori Lee, walked down past the hotel's bridal chapel, through the artificial grottoes, past the fake waterfalls, and down to the pool. Destiny, in her donated outfit of an ivory-colored Alfred Angelo gown, a veil by Bel Aire, and Dyeables shoes, and carrying sunflowers and Gerber daisies that had been supplied by Amazon Events, a local décor company, was escorted along the red carpet by her father. Ken, who was wearing his dress uniform, looked on with a grin.

Destiny's sister, Bliss Esposito, read a poem she had written, called "They Won a Wedding," which ribbed the couple for their protracted courtship. "So today here we stand, too late to falter, with Kenny and Des finally at the altar," Bliss read. "They're surrounded by loved ones, some close to tears, and, oh, did I mention the fifteen hundred conventioneers?" Justice Michael Cherry, who had offered his services after reading about the planned wedding in the local newspaper, pronounced them man and wife.

Bride and groom embraced and kissed, and everyone applauded—both those who actually knew the couple and those for whom Ken and Destiny were an astonishing instance of that which is axiomatically impossible: a couple who had been persuaded to wed by the wedding industry itself. It was a very moving moment, and tears of happiness were shed on both sides of the chlorinated depths. ♦

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AD NAUSEAM

Long ago, I got a job proofreading advertising copy for a swank little boutique ad firm situated in a hip downtown loft. For years, I had searched without success for a job like this, a job that could be both engaging and rote, challenging and leisurely, a job I might "enjoy" even as I remained detached, a job with colleagues who were smart, good-looking, and—in some hard-to-define way having to do with cultural and artistic ambitions—like-minded. And, of course, I wanted this job to leave me some disposable income at the end of each month, and, because I needed time to get on with the writing that I thought of as my real work, I wanted to roll in three days a week, max.

At last, this job, this godsend, came. But, in a way that provoked the sorts of questions about desire and appearance that psychoanalysts and folklorists routinely ask in their work, it wound up causing pain and, in the course of a few weeks, the end of my friendship with my co-worker H., a lesbian writer who, many years later, got into drugs and took her own life.

There was a time when H. and I and our friends lived in a world in which out-and-out support for one another's artistic mission was essential as the token of membership in the larger community of people with hopes and dreams. This was also, as it happened, the era of ACT UP, the time in which the play "Angels in America" was first popular, the time in which it was coming to be accepted (at least in New York and San Francisco) that erotic practice and the freedom to produce a self-defining sexual identity might justifiably constitute moral, political, and spiritual vanguardism. I mention this because it was an idea that I found appealing—it allowed me the fantasy that I had an inside track on matters relating to diversity and happiness—and because it informed the way I came to see my new workplace: a plank-floored, high-ceilinged, soft-colored, hyperdesigned space in which Led Zeppelin played loudly through public-address speakers, and in which even the "accounts" people wore transgressive fashions.

Every other day or so, I went to work. It always seemed to me, on arriving at the loft, that some people were engaged in tasks while others were brazenly lounging on sofas. I soon got in the habit of taking off my shoes and padding around in socks, something I'd done while working temporary jobs in more traditional corporate offices, uptight banking conglomerates, and so on, where the practice got me gently patronized for my "artistic" personality. Now, at the ad firm, I tried to horn in on conversations about Republicans and "The Robin Byrd Show." I got my coffee and sat down with galleys of catalogues. I was meticulous, as the job required, and always sought confirmation that my proofreader's marks were appropriate to the typesetter's needs. On one or two occasions, I even brought in fruit from a nearby farmers' market, which I left in a bowl for co-workers.

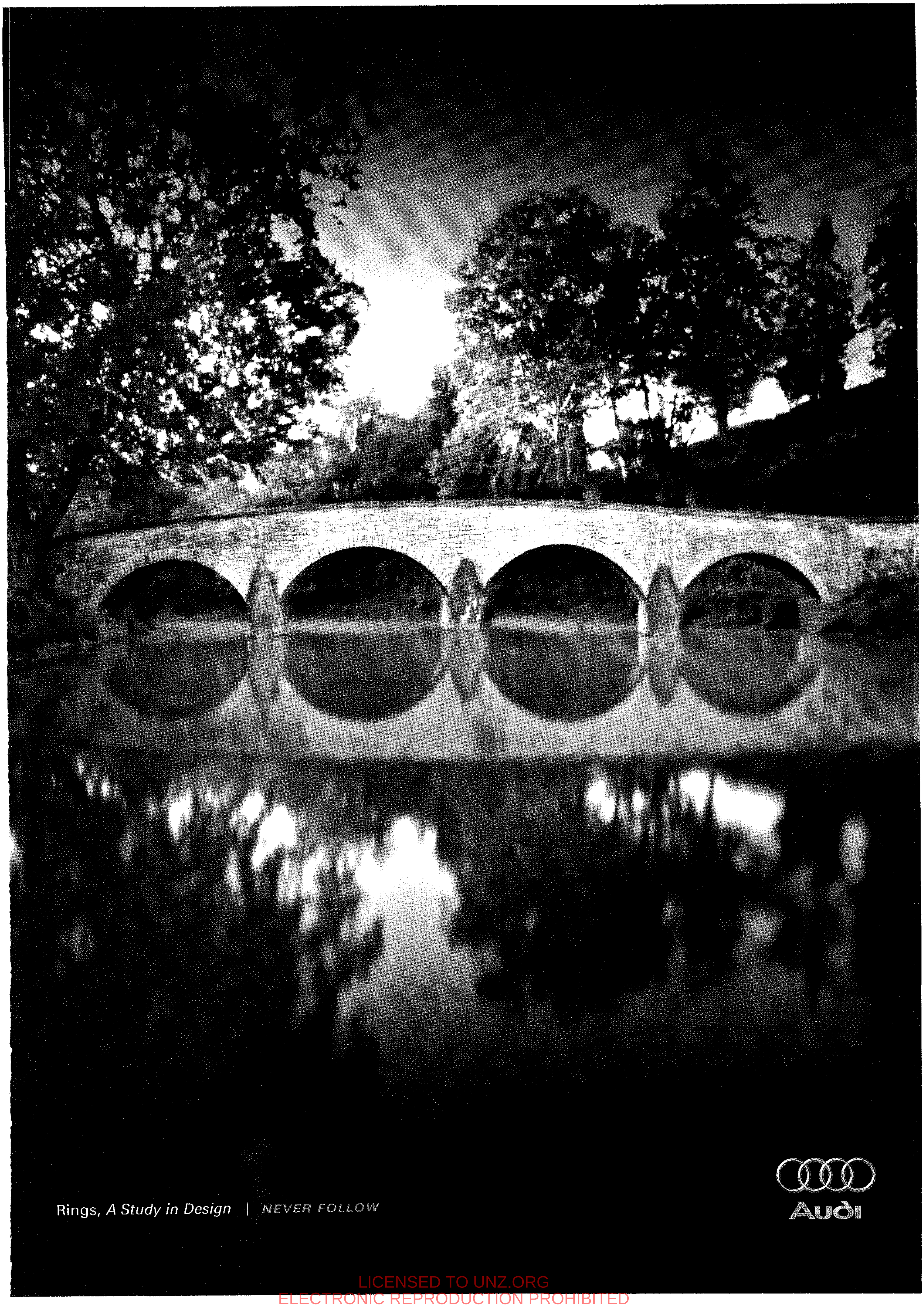
Then, one day, I was told I would no longer be given any work to do, and that I need not return. No one would tell me why, exactly. But everyone knew I was out. I asked H. to help me understand what was happening. Had my work been bad? Had I made mistakes? If so, why hadn't someone told me earlier, when I'd checked repeatedly? Why wouldn't people look at me? Had I offended someone? Was it because I'd worn socks and no shoes? Why was it acceptable to wear socks at a bank, and punishable at this liberal and rocking place? And what about the fruit I'd brought for people? And why wouldn't H. stick up for me? And I dared to ask her: Was I being let go because I wasn't gay? The proofreading department was gay. Did they not want me around? I could understand that. But wait. At that time, when gay life styles first emerged as models for universally desirable social improvements, I was, I thought, about as gay as a straight man can be without being a straight man who everyone knows is gay. How gay is that? How psychotic is that?

A while after I got fired, other people got fired. H. got fired. The guy who fired H., and who had officially fired me, got fired. Then someone told me that someone had told him that someone at or near the top was a paranoid cokehead, and I devised in my mind a picture of a company that was not so much a freestanding workplace as a complex organism programmed to systematically devour and—as is often the way with family groups, institutions, and even great nations—destroy itself.

There is not much joy in being devoured and destroyed. There is, however, some small pleasure in watching one's devourers get devoured.

On the other hand, I recently looked in the business pages and found that the swank little ad firm is still listed. ♦

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN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ANNALS OF LAW

PAYDAY

Everybody's getting rich, except the city.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

To protect itself against lawsuits, the city has established a risk-management unit.

BARRY BLITT

Someone unfamiliar with the New York courts might conclude that Darryl Barnes had a pretty weak lawsuit against the city. In 1988, according to evidence presented at trial, he was a twenty-three-year-old member of a gang known as the Five Percenters, which espoused an ideological hatred of the police and urged its members to shoot and kill police officers rather than submit to arrest. On the night of August 22nd, Barnes was carrying an illegal Tec-9 submachine gun on a street not far from Yankee Stadium, in the Bronx. Frantz Jerome, an off-duty cop who had just left a ballgame, saw Barnes's gun, identified himself as a police officer, and told the young man to drop it. Barnes bolted, telling Officer Jerome, "Fuck you," and Jerome chased him to a gas station. There, according to Jerome, Barnes wheeled, assumed the combat position, and fired his gun at Jerome. (In pleading guilty to attempted assault, Barnes admitted that he possessed the gun and pointed it at the officer. Two Tec-9 shell casings were found on the sidewalk.) Jerome returned fire, shooting three times, hitting Barnes once and leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Barnes sued the city, claiming that Jerome had used excessive force to subdue him. His case went well: in 1998, a jury awarded Barnes $76.4 million in damages.

An appeals court reversed the original judgment in 2002, and last month the city got a second chance in the Darryl Barnes case. The new trial, played out in the Bronx over five weeks, underscored a central priority of the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg: tort reform. The amount paid by the city in civil damages has soared in recent years, from $21.4 million in 1978 to $557 million in 2001, an increase of more than twenty-five hundred per cent, compared with an increase of a hundred and eighty per cent in the cost of living. With the city confronting a budget deficit of more than three billion dollars, that drain looks especially painful. To reduce the city's tort bill, Mayor Bloomberg is pressing the City Council and the State Legislature for a variety of changes, such as capping pain-and-suffering awards at a quarter of a million dollars, shifting cases to non-jury trials, and limiting the city's liability in slip-and-fall cases. State governments, insurance companies, doctors' organizations, and the Bush Administration are launching similar initiatives. "Neither the state nor the city has any money," says Michael Cardozo, who as corporation counsel is the city's top lawyer for civil cases, "so these changes in the law are a way for the state to help us without giving us any cash."

The conventional explanation for the growth in tort awards places most of the responsibility with plaintiffs' lawyers, who are believed to beguile juries with their eloquence and legislators with their campaign largesse. There is much truth in this, but plaintiffs' lawyers compose only one part of the tort ecosystem. The city finds itself in this situation for other reasons—among them greed, municipal ineptitude, and the law of unintended consequences. Darryl Barnes's trial and retrial displayed this dysfunctional system in all its tattered glory.

The soot-stained limestone walls of the Bronx County Courthouse, which stands just beyond Yankee Stadium's center-field fence, have long been thought to enclose a kind of Nirvana for tort plaintiffs. In fact, much of the city is a virtual heaven for plaintiffs. According to figures compiled by the Office of the Corporation Counsel for the last fiscal year, the city wins only about half of its tort trials in the Bronx; its batting average in Brooklyn and Queens is about the same. In Manhat-

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tan, with its more upscale jurors, the city wins about two-thirds of the time. When the lawyers took their places for opening statements in the Barnes retrial, in February, it was easy to tell the favorite from the underdog.

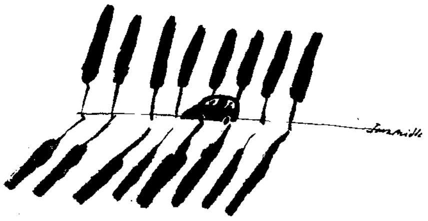
As he rose before the jury, Robert Simels, who has represented Darryl Barnes for fifteen years, positively gleamed: he wore a gold tie and gold cufflinks, gold eyeglass frames, a gold bracelet, and a gold watch. His pen was silver, and his hair was carefully and recently barbered. Gesturing around a room so cramped that the lawyers for the plaintiff and the defense shared the same, small table, Simels began, "The size of this courtroom is not going to be indicative of this case, because this is a big case." Simels asserted that "essentially there is one principal witness in this case. . . . And that is the jacket and shirt of Darryl Barnes that he wore on August 22, 1988." The holes in the clothing showed "cylinder flash," which Simels said meant that his client had been shot in the back at close range after he dropped his gun and surrendered.

In the retrial, the six jurors and three alternates included five black women, one Hispanic man, two Hispanic women, and one white woman—a fairly typical mixture for the Bronx—and Simels didn't hesitate to make an explicit pitch for ethnic solidarity. "They may suggest to you that Darryl was something other than an angel," Simels said. "But whether they say this because Darryl is a Muslim, or they say that Darryl is African-American, or whatever they may say— "

Simels's racial pandering sent Patrick Mantione, the city's lawyer, vaulting out of his seat with an objection, which was sustained. With a shaggy mane and frayed tie, Mantione had the battered look of a veteran civil servant, but his combative, vigorous representation of the city was in marked contrast with the first time the case was tried. During summations in that trial, Simels so rattled the Corporation Counsel's attorney that she walked out of the courtroom in the middle of the proceedings. (The judge, who had been a lawyer for almost thirty-five years, said at the time, "In my entire experience, I never saw any attorney leave the courtroom during summation.") The Corporation Counsel has six hundred and fifty lawyers, making it the city's third-largest law firm (after Skadden, Arps and Legal Aid), but its salary scale greatly limits its ability to lure and retain top talent. In cases that involve high stakes, the city can be heavily outmatched.

In the abstract, cases like Barnes's—millions for a gun-toting criminal?—look absurd. But, as the retrial, before Justice Bertram Katz, unfolded, it didn't take long to see how the city could lose. The first witness, Paul Thordsen, was one of the first cops on the scene after the shooting. Fifteen years had passed, and Thordsen remembered little about what he had done that night. Did he find one or two shells on the ground? Thordsen had testified both ways. And, as for Barnes's Tec-9, the fearsome weapon that was the centerpiece of the city's case, a police property clerk had mistakenly destroyed it and the shell casings almost ten years ago. Worse, Officer Jerome's gun was not produced. The next witness, Jeremy Jacobowitz, another officer who responded to the shooting, had lost his notebook from 1988. The testimony of these white cops had jurors rolling their eyes—even before Simels began cross-examining.

The jurors' reactions wouldn't matter if cases against the city operated by the same rules as those against the state. Tort cases against New York State are heard in the Court of Claims, which does not have jury trials. The state paid out only sixty million dollars in damage awards last year, eleven per cent of the city's half-billion-dollar bill. Bloomberg wants the State Legislature to pass a law shifting most claims against the city to the Court of Claims, but his lobbying task won't be easy. Amendments to such obscure laws may benefit the unorganized mass of city taxpayers, but they are a threat to the highly organized and focussed trial lawyers. If Bloomberg wins this change, says Jeffrey A. Lichtman, the president of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association, "juries would no longer decide cases of police brutality, negligent city doctors, or unsafe schools. . . . Whom would you want to decide whether your injury is frivolous or who is responsible for your child's birth defect—a politically appointed judge or a jury of your peers?"



Tort law is supposed to encourage better practices on the part of defendants, as well as to compensate wronged plaintiffs. "In recent decades, the notion that tort law can be used to deter wrongdoing and increase the cost of wrongful activity has taken hold," says Peter H. Schuck, a professor at Yale Law School and the author of "Suing Government: Citizen Remedies for Official Wrongs," a study of tort suits against municipalities. "The idea is that we want people who are considering taking some action to take into account the costs that these actions may impose on others. That's why we charge companies or government agencies for the harm that they create. Having to absorb that cost, they would have an incentive to train their employees in different ways, provide different equipment, and generally figure out a way for their employees to do what they do more safely." By this theory, New York would use tort cases as a kind of teaching tool—to encourage the city to change its practices in a positive way.

The city, however, does no such thing. The main components of the city's tort bill in 2001 were $174 million in medical-malpractice judgments; $77 million in sidewalk accidents; $61 million in automobile accidents; $37 million in cases against the police; and $26 million in cases involving public schools. None of these damage awards came out of the budgets of the departments that committed the torts but, rather, were paid from the city's general fund. "If one were to adjust an agency's current budget based on tort judgments, you'd be punishing the current administration for the sins of past administrations, since it takes four or five years for cases to work through the system," Lawrence S. Kahn, the chief litigating assistant at the Corporation Counsel, says.

In recent months, the Corporation Counsel has created a risk-management unit to try to focus on and learn from recurring causes of accidents, but for the most part the city merely tries to beat back the lawsuits—a steady average of about eight or nine thousand new cases a year. And the outcome of these trials

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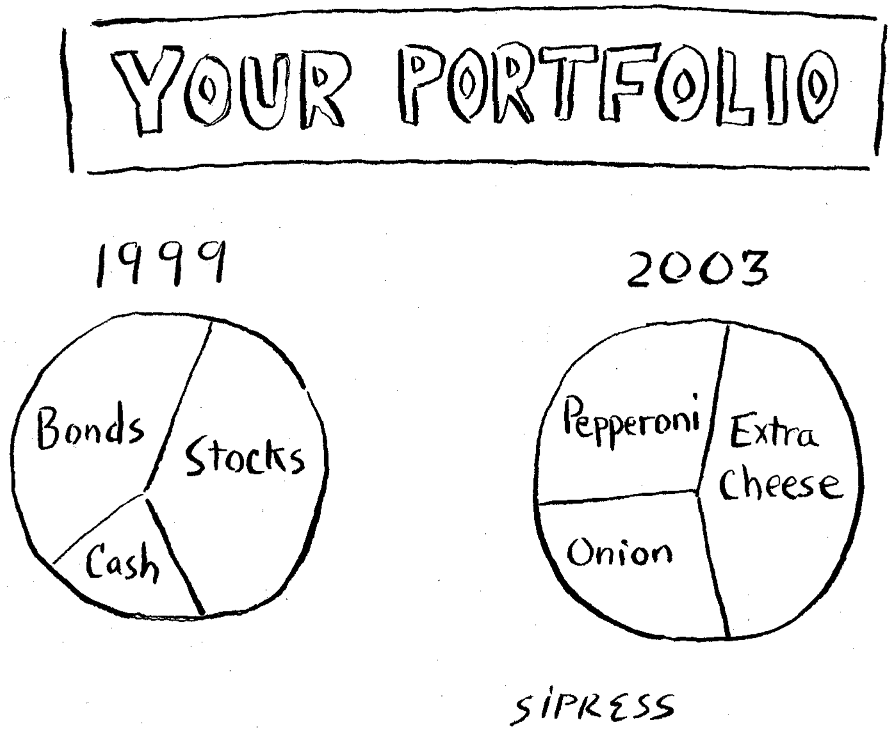
often depends on the impression made by the serendipitous cast of witnesses who happen to have seen, heard, or known something about the facts in dispute. It was Darryl Barnes's good fortune, for example, that a key witness in his case was his father.

Darryl Barnes himself did not attend the trial. After the shooting, he lived in a small apartment in the Bronx, but his behavior became increasingly erratic. According to the testimony of Linda Sacco, a community health worker, she was called to Barnes's home forty to fifty times between 1991 and 1998. She would sometimes find him sitting on the couch wearing nothing but a T-shirt, and on other occasions he had smeared feces on the wall. He often held on to his adult diapers, and the stench was awful. During this period, Sacco had Barnes committed several times to mental hospitals. About two and a half years ago, Barnes moved to a rehabilitation nursing home in New Jersey, where he still lives. According to Daniel Schwartz, a forensic psychiatrist who testified for the plaintiff, Barnes today is "inappropriately contentious," living in a state of perpetual rage at his paralysis. "He refers frequently to Dr. Kevorkian," Schwartz testified. "He says he would give Dr. Kevorkian a million dollars to help him end his life." Barnes told Schwartz that he had become a Muslim and adopted the name "x35y."

Simels didn't want to risk displaying his potentially offensive client to the jury, and Judge Katz allowed him to introduce into evidence sworn testimony about the shooting which Barnes had given in 1989 and 1992. According to Barnes's account, on the night of the shooting his friend Radcliff (whose last name Barnes claimed not to know) had got into an altercation with another person (unknown to Barnes), who was reaching for the Tec-9. During the fight, Barnes said, "my friend punched the guy in the face, and the weapon fell, and I just grabbed the weapon." A little while later, Barnes heard someone say, "Freeze, police." Barnes did as he was told and dropped the gun, but the officer then shot him in the back at close range. Rather than focus on his client's rendering of the night in question, Simels wisely chose to spend most of his time detailing the extent of Barnes's injuries.

The cause of Barnes's mental deterioration was hotly contested. Experts for the plaintiff attributed his problems to depression caused by his injury. For the city, Mantione argued chiefly that Barnes's psychosis had organic causes, but he also implied at various times that the plaintiff's counsel was manipulating Barnes to keep him from testifying. (Barnes told a hospital worker that he was a "five per cent Muslim," but the judge in his first trial excluded this evidence as irrelevant and inflammatory. The appeals court disagreed, and ordered the retrial.) The jury heard lengthy testimony, conducted in nearly incomprehensible scientific jargon, about the causes of Barnes's mental problems, but the mere existence of the controversy served to emphasize the extent of Barnes's injuries.



So, in a much more emotional way, did the testimony of Dudley Barnes, Darryl's father. A figure of dignity and sadness, Dudley Barnes had recently retired from the postal service, after spending thirty-five years installing surveillance equipment. He now works as the director of security for a prep school in Westchester County. He testified that Darryl's mother, who suffered from acute alcoholism, had left the family when the boy was three years old, and that he and Darryl's grandmother had raised him. Darryl had gone to parochial school, and then to Martin Luther King High School, in Manhattan, from which he graduated. He loved basketball, drawing, and karate, which he was taught by some police officers who were friends of the family. (This connection to the police came in over Mantione's objection.) In his deposition, Barnes admitted that at the age of twenty-three his entire employment history consisted of two days as a messenger.

Dudley Barnes trembled as he described his son's life since he was shot. Sometimes Darryl talked to his useless legs; sometimes he didn't talk at all. Dudley brought his son a television at the nursing home, but Darryl unplugged it, preferring to stare out the window. During weekly visits to the nursing home, Dudley used to bring ethnic foods from the city, but recently Darryl had refused to eat. His weight had fallen from a hundred and sixty-five to a hundred and five pounds. On the day he was shot, Darryl was wearing a family crucifix, which Dudley now wore. The crucifix was introduced into evidence, and, as it was passed from juror to juror, several had tears in their eyes.

Strictly speaking, the crucifix may not have been relevant evidence, but it's the kind of thing that juries see all the time in personal-injury cases. In such an environment, the trial becomes less an as-

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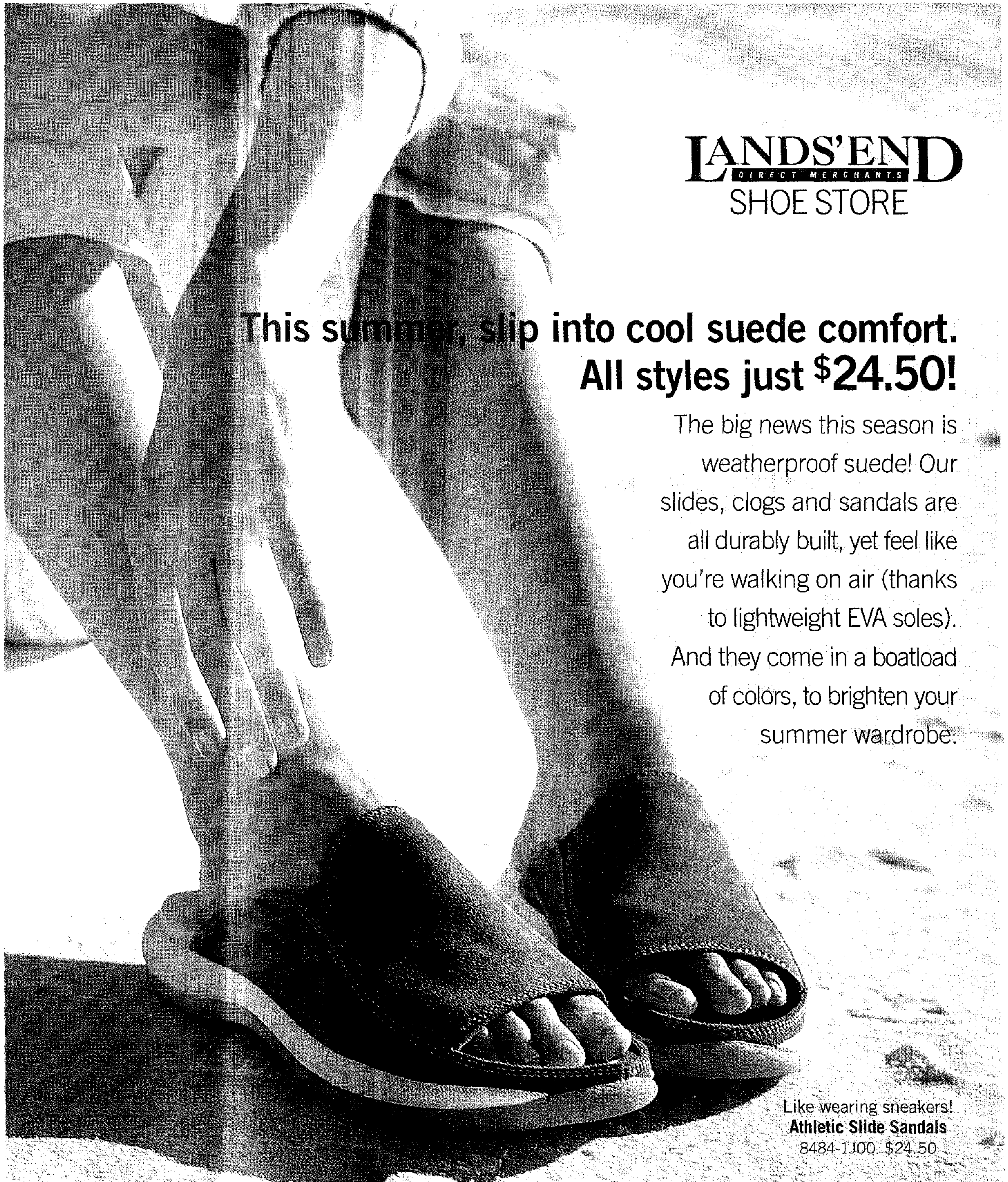

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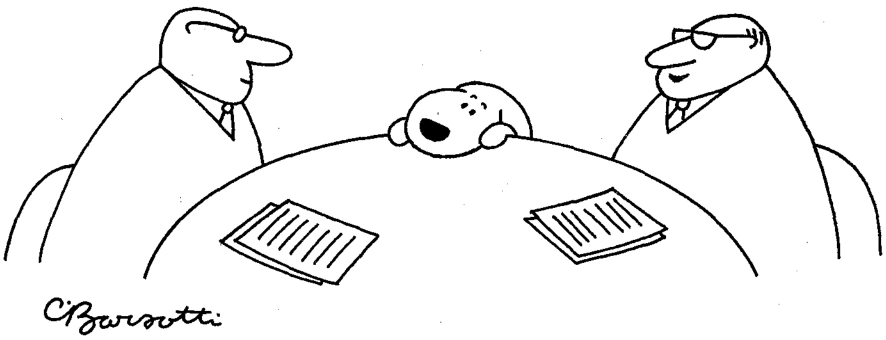
sessment of the city's liability than a memorial to the plaintiff's humanity. It's not entirely surprising, then, that the cause of preserving access to jury trials for individual plaintiffs has become bound up with the contemporary civil-rights movement. "People need justice," Assemblyman Keith Wright, a Harlem Democrat, told me. "The Governor and the Mayor want to move a whole bunch of cases to the Court of Claims—get them away from juries and get them to mostly white judges, thus eliminating any sort of equal access. Juries are the voices of these communities." As State Senator David A. Paterson, also a Manhattan Democrat, put it, "I will not stand by and allow this 'back of the bus' system of injustice to be imposed on my constituents." The financial drain of jury awards, which has a direct impact on these communities (not just on the tort plaintiffs), is less of a concern. "I don't think people look at it as taking money out of the city treasury," Wright said. "They say that it's time for someone from my community to benefit from all the wrongs that have been inflicted on them. It's hard to put a price on pain."



"I give you the seven-billion-dollar pup, then you give me back the seven-billion-dollar pup, and we've each made seven billion dollars."

And, in an era of few victories for civil-rights advocates, they and their allies in the personal-injury bar are fighting hard to keep open the spigot of tort damages. The reasons for their recent successes are vigorously disputed. Plaintiffs' lawyers argue that the trend is a blip, caused by the Corporation Counsel's decision to settle cases earlier and clear out a long backlog. "The city hired Price Waterhouse to do a big study, which told them that if they settled cases earlier in the process the ultimate costs would be less," Lichtman, of the trial lawyers' association, says. "They have taken that advice over the last three years or so, and that's why the costs to the city are up for the short term." With the number of new cases relatively steady, Lichtman and others argue, the burden on the city should ease in the near future.

City officials have a different explanation for the rising toll: advertising. "Look around the subway," says Fay Leoussis, who is the chief of the tort division for the Office of the Corporation Counsel. "It's not only the number of ads for personal-injury lawyers that have gone up but it's the way that they advertise. It used to be they'd talk about the reputation of their firm. Now they're talking about the amount of the judgments they're getting. We're winning the same or a better percentage of cases than we ever did, but the awards are getting bigger. Our jurors ride the subways, they see those multimillion-dollar verdicts advertised, and they think that's the way it's supposed to be." In truth, no one can say for sure why the city's bill has grown so much, and this uncertainty also extends to the impact of the reforms that Bloomberg and others are pushing. History shows that the city harbors few more resilient and adaptive citizens than its personal-injury lawyers.

The city also tried tort reform during its fiscal crisis in the late seventies. Bedevilled by lawsuits for accidents on sidewalks and curbs, the Koch administration passed a law that said the city could be sued only if it had fifteen days' notice of the specific defect. In theory, then, this sort of case would be thrown out of court unless someone had first informed the city of the particular problem that caused the accident.

Plaintiffs' lawyers responded by creating a bizarre nonprofit entity called the Big Apple Pothole and Sidewalk Protection Committee. Stephan Peskin, a jovial personal-injury lawyer with a walrus mustache, serves as the president of Big Apple, and one day recently he walked me from his office, near Ground Zero, to the headquarters of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association, where Big Apple is housed. Peskin is something of a pothole connoisseur—"There's one that was around for so long that I was going to give it a bar Mitzvah," he said—and he takes to his work with gusto. "Ed Koch's pitch to the public was 'Show us where the potholes are so we can go fix them,'" Peskin said. So the trial lawyers hired a company to map every defect on every sidewalk, crosswalk, and curb in the city. Surveyors walk the streets and record such defects as cracked sidewalks, broken curbs, and potholes. "We've been doing it for twenty years now," Peskin said.

By the city's estimate, Big Apple has identified about seven hundred thousand defects, which would cost $2.7 billion to repair. Eight or ten times a year, a Big Apple clerk takes the new maps over to the city's Department of Transportation, thus giving the city "notice" of the defects. Members of the trial lawyers' association who want to use the maps in court can buy them from Big Apple for three hundred and seventy-five dollars each. "The whole point of what we're doing is trying to help the city to fix the potholes," Peskin said.

"This was not done because I asked these lawyers to do anything. That's ridiculous," Mayor Koch told me. "Lawyers, being very smart, decided that the way that they could subvert this law was to turn in these maps. But the maps are useless to the city—because there are probably millions of defects, unless you have a real description there is no way to know which ones to deal with first." In other words, the "notice" provided by the Big Apple maps is little more than a legal fiction, designed to perpetuate lawsuits against the city. Koch points out another absurdity about the law of potholes in New York. "The property of the

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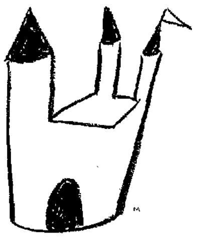
sidewalk belongs to the abutting landowners, and, under the law, they are required to keep it maintained," Koch said. "But the landlords don't get sued. The landlord has the responsibility, but the city gets the liability. It's the city that gets sued because we have the deep pockets." (Bloomberg is trying to change this law in the City Council.)

In other words, Koch's adventure in tort reform yielded the worst of all possible results. The financial burden on the city grew, and the purported cure failed to address the underlying problem; the result was more lawsuits—and more potholes. As for future reforms, Koch doesn't hold out much hope for the City Council or for the State Legislature. "Bloomberg is absolutely right, but the trial lawyers use their campaign contributions down to the lowest possible legislative group, in this case the City Council. That's why they get protection when they lobby against these changes," Koch said. As for the Albany lawmakers, Koch went on, "You really have to be so angry at the legislators. They are just simply terrible. They have no feeling for the city, and are totally unconcerned and unprotective of the city, and they'll rot in hell for it, if I have my way."

Back in the Bronx, far from the lofty debates preoccupying his bosses, Pat Mantione closed the city's case with a gamble. He called only one witness, a professor at California State University in Sacramento and an expert on the Five Percenters gang, who testified about the group's outlaw ways. (Over the years, both sides in the Barnes case spent thousands of dollars on experts, among them psychiatrists, economists, health planners, criminalists, videographers, and medical examiners.) Since 1988, Officer Jerome had described the shooting of Darryl Barnes many times, often contradicting himself in the process. Mantione thought his case would be best served by relying on excerpts from Jerome's prior testimony. One of the smaller absurdities of the Barnes case was that fifteen years of litigation led to a trial in which the jury heard from neither of the protagonists.



In his summation, on March 13th, Mantione didn't even fill his allotted hour; instead, he built a crisp, well-organized argument around the same simple theme that he had driven home repeatedly during the trial. "This case is about what it's always been about," he told the jurors, "which is that Darryl Barnes tried to kill Detective Jerome." After five weeks of testimony, Simels looked a little less confident than he did at the beginning of the case. Earlier that morning, in the hallway outside the courtroom, he pointed to a story in the *Post* about two detectives who had been murdered in Staten Island while attempting an undercover purchase of a Tec-9—the kind of gun that Barnes had wielded. Like Officer Jerome, one of the murdered cops was of Haitian origin. "That doesn't help," Simels told me. Worse, relations between Simels and Judge Katz had become poisonous. The Judge didn't like Simels's wise-guy asides, and he let the jury know it. As Simels began his closing argument, he all but admitted that the Judge had turned against him and that the jurors were his only hope. "This system is all about you six people," he said.

For Simels, like the opponents of tort reform generally, the case represented a form of political expression for the jurors. "We have to ask ourselves, Is it possible that a police officer could engage in excessive force in this city and the County of the Bronx?" he asked the jurors. "The city would suggest to you that does not happen. But life tells us it's not so." To Simels, this was a case about policing the police. He turned to Jerome, who was sitting in the back of the courtroom, and asked rhetorically, "Could you tell us why you shot him in the back?" After a dramatic pause, the lawyer muttered, "I don't think so."

Judge Katz was unimpressed. Ten times, he sustained Mantione's objections to Simels's remarks. "Don't mislead the jury!" the Judge scolded. Then, when Simels referred to evidence that Katz had ruled inadmissible, the Judge erupted. He demanded that Simels stop talking and join him in his chambers. There Katz berated Simels so loudly that, back in the courtroom, the jurors shared embarrassed smiles. Plainly rattled, Simels raced through the rest of his remarks, and, after precisely one hour, Judge Katz cut him off in midsentence.

Following a few minutes of deliberations, the jurors sent out a note. They wanted to hear all of Barnes's and Jerome's prior testimony. The lawyers settled in for a reading that looked like it was going to take about three hours.

Michael Cardozo, the corporation counsel, works in a sixth-floor corner office overlooking Ground Zero. In the days after September 11th, the rubble outside reached the eighth floor. The view reminds Cardozo that, even if tort reform succeeds, the city's legal predicament may soon get much worse. More than fifteen hundred firefighters, and more than a hundred other city workers, have filed suits against the city in connection with the terrorist attacks. "They allege that their lungs were damaged during the cleanup, and that the city should have foreseen the need to keep thousands of respirators in stock," Cardozo told me. The cases are at an early stage, and some of the prospective plaintiffs may choose to seek money from the federal relief fund rather than file civil suits. (People who accept compensation from the federal fund must agree to forgo filing lawsuits.) Cardozo knows that the firefighters would make extremely sympathetic plaintiffs, so he is quick to note that the city opposes their claims "without taking anything away from their heroism." In short, the story of the September 11th lawsuits against the city is just beginning, and the total claims already stand at more than twelve billion dollars, and rising.

But Cardozo has learned that, in front of New York juries, almost everyone looks like a sympathetic plaintiff, even Darryl Barnes. On the first afternoon of deliberations, the jurors in the Barnes case listened to only a few minutes of the previous testimony before signalling to Judge Katz that they wanted to resume their deliberations. Then, after weighing the case for less than three hours, they ordered the taxpayers of New York to pay Barnes $1.135 million for past medical expenses, $15 million for past pain and suffering, and $35 million for future pain and suffering—a total of $51.135 million in damages. The city plans to appeal. ♦

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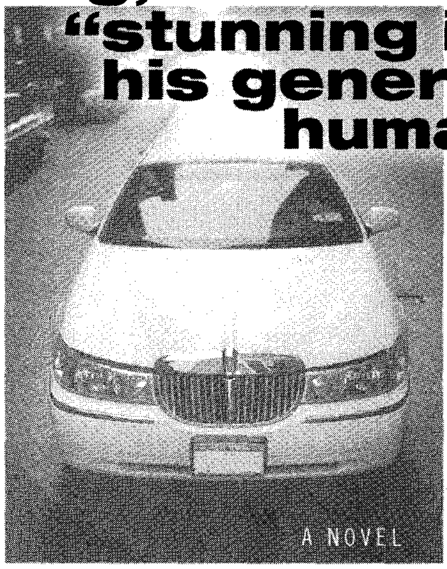

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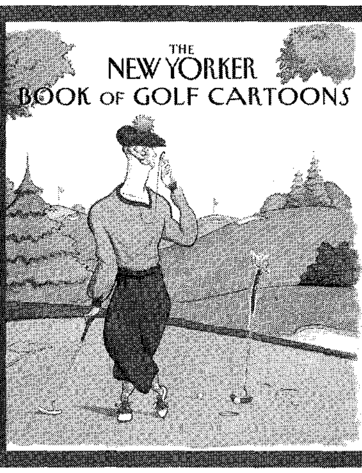

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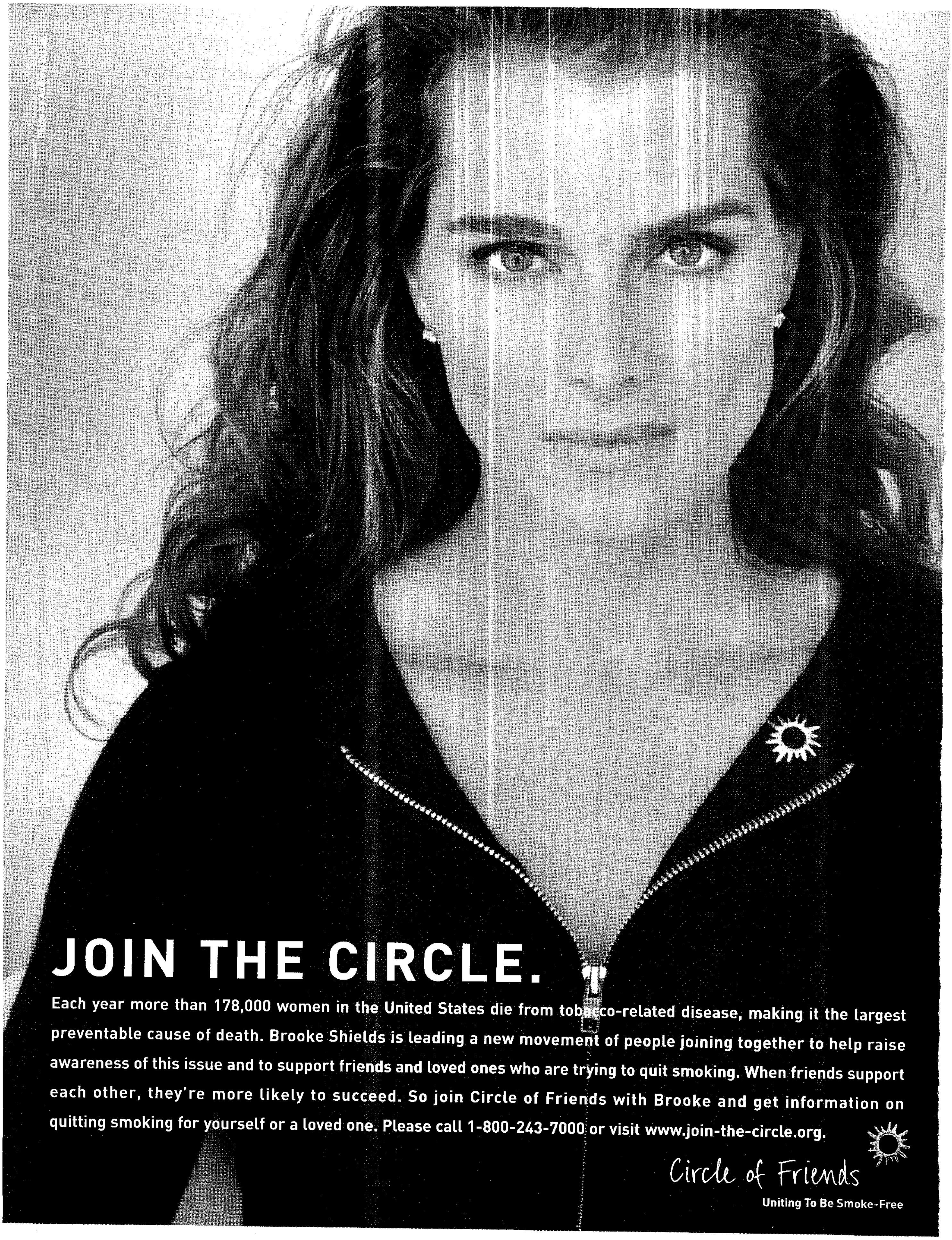

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REMAKE

BY DAVID OWEN

"It's a Wonderful Life" (2003): The sentimental tale of George Bailey, who has selflessly dedicated his life to his family and his beloved Bedford Falls. It's George's seventy-fifth birthday and his fiftieth wedding anniversary, and he has just announced to a large gathering of friends that he is turning over the presidency of his thriving Chevrolet dealership to his forty-year-old adopted son and only child, George, Jr., who, on this same evening, has married, finally, a considerably younger and stunningly beautiful former homecoming queen, who, a moment ago, whispered to George and his adored and adoring wife, Mary, that she is eager to begin producing grandchildren. George, full of happiness, steps away from the crowd, and, alone on a terrace, looks up in wonder at the star-filled sky, thanks God for his astonishing good fortune, and, feeling a tap on his shoulder, turns and meets Clarence Oddbody, an angel (second class), who has been sent to Earth to earn his wings. Clarence asks George if he would be interested in knowing what Bedford Falls would be like today if George had never been born, and George, who has occasionally permitted himself, with uncharacteristic though justifiable pride, to wonder this very thing, says he would. They set off on foot, and George spots a young man in uniform who—can it be?—looks exactly like a private from the platoon George led in Korea, a private who died in the ambush that led to George's being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, for repelling an enemy attack single-handed after ripping a machine gun from the back of an overturned jeep and dragging the private's dead body back to a secure position with his teeth. The man in uniform, it turns out, is the grandson of the dead private—who didn't die after all, because the platoon, without George to lead it, didn't go on patrol that day and instead lolled around playing cards until lights-out. On the next block, where Bailey Chevrolet ought to be, George sees the Potter Medical Center, inside which George, Jr.—although that's not his name, since he was adopted not by George and Mary but by a guy who, George realizes, once worked briefly in his body shop—discovered the cure for cancer a few days ago, to the delight of his beautiful wife, a theoretical physicist and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, and their three lovely children, the eldest of whom just skipped straight from seventh grade to ninth grade and loves to go fishing with his grandpa. The hospital turns out to have been built by and named for Henry F. Potter, Bedford Falls' richest man, whom George has always thought of as a "money-grubbing buzzard" and foreign-car driver but who, under the benevolent influence of his wife, Mary—yes, George's own Mary, who looks fitter, better dressed, and ten years younger than she did at the party George just left—has devoted the past fifty years to giving away his fortune and paying besotted attention to the five lovely daughters whom Mary, fertile after all, bore him. One of those daughters is now the mayor of Bedford Falls; one is an astronaut; one is the chief executive of a global software company that has never enriched its top executives with unfairly priced stock options; one is a chemist, who just came up with an easy way to reverse global warming; and the youngest, Zuzu, is the President of the United States. Last week, Zuzu negotiated a sweeping disarmament treaty with the world's other nuclear powers, and earlier today she announced that the federal government would stop collecting income taxes, because the Treasury is full. George swoons. When he recovers, Clarence hands him a revolver, tips his hat, and strolls down the street, whistling. As the scene fades to black, we hear a single gunshot, followed, in the distance, by the tinkling of a bell. (PG, English, Color) ♦

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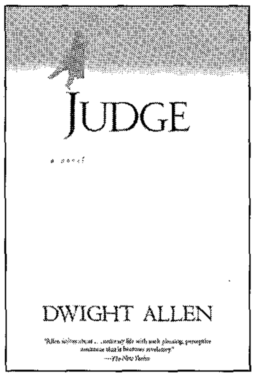

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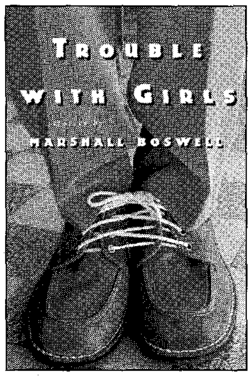

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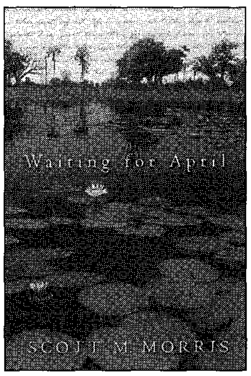

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ANNALS OF LABOR

NOBODIES

Does slavery exist in America?

BY JOHN BOWE

Some forty miles inland from the coastal resorts of Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel Island, the town of Immokalee sits at the bottom of a string of remote agricultural outposts extending through the South Florida interior. The swampy terrain seems an unlikely choice for farmland, but over the past sixty years it has been transformed by canals, pumps, and fertilizer; today, the area is a major source of winter produce sold in the United States.

Three stoplights long, Immokalee (which rhymes with "broccoli" and means "my home" in Seminole) is bordered on the south by the Big Cypress swamp, and surrounded on all other sides by citrus groves and tomato fields. The town's official population is about twenty thousand, but during the growing season, between November and May, it increases to nearly twice that. The town looks more like a work camp than like an American community. Municipal authorities provide little in the way of public services; for several days recently, on Main Street, visitors entering town passed a decapitated black dog, left to rot on the median strip across from a new Walgreen's. In 2001, a county sheriff's deputy was sentenced to fourteen years in prison for dealing crack and shaking down local drug dealers.

Forty years ago, Immokalee's population consisted largely of poor whites, African-Americans, and Puerto Ricans. In the eighties, Haitians arrived, and a little later Guatemalans began to trickle in. Today, some Haitians, whites, and African-Americans remain, but the business district is overwhelmingly oriented toward Mexican and Central American migrants.

Between four-thirty and five o'clock every morning, a convoy of crudely painted red and blue school buses arrives at a parking lot on South Third Street, a block from Main Street, to carry workers to the fields. In the afternoon, the buses return, and the sidewalks fill with weary men, many wearing muddy rubber boots, their shirts and pants stained deep green from the juice of tomato leaves. (Ninety per cent of the town's migrant population are men.) In the evening, workers wear tucked-in Western shirts, baseball caps or cowboy hats, and Reebok knockoffs. Some stay home to wash their few items of clothing or cook dinner; those with time left on their phone cards line up in parking lots and on street corners before seemingly innumerable pay phones (a staple of migrant towns) to call Chiapas, Oaxaca, Huehuetenango.

In many parts of the Southeast, agricultural workers are quartered in trailer camps miles from town; Immokalee's pickers, as citrus and tomato workers are often called, live in plain sight, densely concentrated between First and Ninth Streets, close to the South Third Street pickup spot. Those who don't live there are forced either to walk a great distance twice a day or to pay extra for a ride to work. As a result, rents near the parking lot are high. The town's largest landlord, a family named Blocker, owns several hundred old shacks and mobile homes, many rusting and mildew-stained, which can rent for upward of two hundred dollars a week, a square-footage rate approaching Manhattan's. (Heat and phone service are not provided.) It isn't unusual for twelve workers to share a trailer.

Immokalee's tomato pickers are paid as little as forty cents per bucket. A filled bucket weighs thirty-two pounds. To earn fifty dollars in a day, an Immokalee picker must harvest two tons of tomatoes, or a hundred and twenty-five buckets.

Orange- and grapefruit-picking pay slightly better, but the hours are longer. To get to the fruit, pickers must climb twelve-to-eighteen-foot-high ladders, propped on soggy soil, then reach deep into thorny branches, thrusting both hands among pesticide-coated leaves before twisting the fruit from its stem and rapidly stuffing it into a shoulder-slung *moral*, or pick sack. (Grove owners post guards in their fields to make sure that the workers do not harm the trees.) A full sack weighs about a hundred pounds; it takes ten sacks—about two thousand oranges—to fill a *baño*, a bin the size of a large wading pool. Each bin earns the worker a *ficha*, or token, redeemable for about seven dollars. An average worker in a decent field can fill six, seven, maybe eight bins a day. After a rain, though, or in an aging field with overgrown trees, the same picker might work an entire day and fill only three bins.

Migrant workers are usually employed by labor contractors, who provide crews to tend and harvest crops for local farmers, or growers, as they're more commonly known. Contractors oversee workers in groups ranging in size from a dozen to many hundreds, and accompany the workers as they travel with the seasons. They can exert near-absolute control over their workers' lives; besides handling the payroll and deducting taxes, they are frequently the sole source of the workers' food and housing, which, in addition to the ride to and from the fields, they provide for a fee.

About ninety per cent of South Florida's laborers are new each season. Recently arrived pickers are often mystified by American culture, unsure of their rights (or the idea of rights in general), and unlikely to speak English. Workers coming from the highlands of southern Mexico and Guatemala speak dozens of languages, including Zapotecan, Mam, Kanjobal, Tzotzil, and Mixteca, and often cannot communicate with each other. In the post-pastoral fields of industrialized modern agriculture, quaint notions of worker solidarity are unrealistic. A former tomato picker named Francisca Cortes told me that workers begin their mornings in the fields by elbowing one another aside as they scramble for positions close to the collection area, each gradient of productivity worth another quarter, another dollar. Under these circumstances, Cortes said, "It's just a bunch of men and some women. You don't know them. You're not there to say, 'What's your name? How are you? How long have you been here?' There just isn't any time for that."

Workers are reluctant to discuss abusive situations with employers, much less with *bolillos*, or white Americans, for fear of losing their jobs and being labelled troublemakers. Those workers without papers live under the constant threat of being seized by *la migra*—the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Some labor contractors use this implicit threat of exposure to keep them in line. Workers often borrow money to travel north from loan sharks back home at interest rates as high as twenty-five per cent per month. If they are deported, the loan is foreclosed. Frequently, homes are put up as collateral, so deportation can be a financial calamity for an entire family.

All these factors combine to create, in South Florida, what a Justice Department official calls "ground zero for

"If you want to leave, go ahead," one supervisor said. "But the bosses will feed you to the alligators." Photograph by Nicole Bengiveno.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

modern slavery." The area has seen six cases of involuntary servitude successfully prosecuted in the past six years. Describing local migrant-contractor power dynamics, Michael Baron, an agent with the U.S. Border Patrol who knows Florida well, told me, "Most of the time, these workers are housed miles from civilization, with no telephones or cars. They're controllable. There's no escape. If you do escape, what are you gonna do? Run seventeen miles to the nearest town, when you don't even know where it is? And, if you have a brother or a cousin in the group, are you gonna leave them behind? You gonna escape with seventeen people? You'll make tracks like a herd of elephants. Whoever's got you, they'll find you. And heaven help you when they do."

In February of 2001, Adan Ortiz decided to leave his home in the Mexican state of Campeche, on the Yucatán Peninsula, where he lived with his wife and six children in a one-room straw hut, to look for a job in the United States. Since the age of nine, he had worked with a machete and an axe, clearing brush for local ranchers or harvesting sugarcane.

Ortiz gets along in Spanish, but his first language is Mixe, a Mayan language spoken by the Mixe Indians, in southern Mexico. He is short (about five-two) and stocky, with a mustache and soft brown eyes, and looks younger than his thirty-eight years. He has an earnestness about him, and speaks with a studied reserve. When he was asked recently if he had ever owned any land, he almost laughed. "I don't even own the dirt under my fingernails!"

Farmwork in Mexico pays about five or six dollars a day—when it's available. Ortiz considered himself lucky to find work two or three days a week near his home. The only way to bring in more income was to bum around the countryside, looking for work, and there was seldom enough to maintain a family. "People use the term 'provide for' just to refer to a plate of beans and salsa and some tortillas," Ortiz explained. "I think for a family you've got to have milk. Right?"

Ortiz left Mexico with two friends. (The three men are referred to in federal documents only by their initials, and I have changed their names.) None of them had gone to school beyond sixth grade. The youngest, eighteen-year-old Rafael Solis Hernandez, lived in his mother's house with his wife and baby. Mario Sanchez, the father of six children, lived in a house built of cardboard. At forty-three, he had difficulty recalling his birthday. He explained, "It's never been celebrated, so I don't even concern myself with it." To travel north, Sanchez brought what money remained from a crop of peppers he'd managed to grow the year before. Ortiz borrowed twenty-five hundred pesos (about two hundred and fifty dollars) from a man he occasionally worked for, and Hernandez borrowed the money from his mother.

They crossed the border with a large group in early March, in the care of a "coyote," or smuggler, and found themselves in the town of Marana, Arizona. None of them had any money left, but the coyote introduced them to a man they nicknamed El Chaparro (Shorty), who gave them permission to sleep in an abandoned trailer home. Thirty-five of them did so for about a week. Then El Chaparro offered to drive them to a place where they could get jobs picking oranges. Terms were never discussed.

Ortiz, Hernandez, and about a dozen others were packed into El Chaparro's rickety van, and the group set forth, accompanied by a car carrying five more passengers, including Sanchez. The trip lasted three days. El Chaparro stopped once for an hour or two to sleep, but passengers were forbidden to get out, even to relieve themselves. For that purpose, a jug was passed around. When asked whether they ate during this time, Ortiz shrugged, and answered, "We didn't have money."

On March 13th, more than three weeks after leaving home, the men reached their destination: Lake Placid, a low-lying town in the swamps of South Florida, about sixty miles north of Immokalee. The van stopped in front of a Mexican grocery store named La Guadalupana, and the passengers were ordered to stay put while El Chaparro got out and talked to two labor contractors, who were later identified to the migrants by their nicknames, Nino and El Diablo.

El Diablo, whose real name is Ramiro Ramos, is a short, solidly built man with close-cropped, graying hair, an impassive manner, and bloodshot eyes. Born in Guanajuato, Mexico, he arrived

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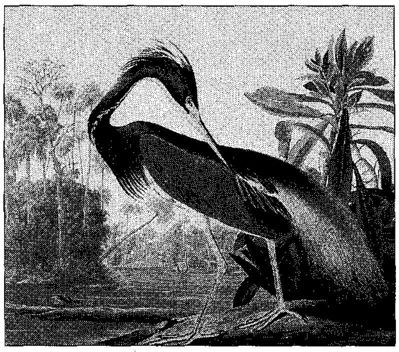

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in this country as an orange picker in the early eighties. He became a *tigre*, or super-picker, whose output was legendary. By the end of the decade, he had worked his way up to contracting. He developed a reputation as the kind of boss who seemed friendly at first, a man "who'd give you your first meal free," a former employee recalled, but who became menacing if angered. He also had a history of threatening his workers with violence. Ramos had married a Mexican-American named Alicia Barajas, whose family runs several sizable labor-contracting operations. "You have to be careful with the Barajases," Baron said. "Their name comes up a lot in law enforcement."

Ramiro Ramos, his brother, Juan Ramos (Nino), and a loose network of cousins and in-laws employed thousands of migrant workers, from South Florida to North Carolina. Records from one of their companies, R & A Harvesting, indicate that between 2000 and 2002 it employed several hundred workers.

Ortiz recalls that when he and his friends first met the new bosses "Señor Nino asked if we had someone to pay El Chaparro for our ride." Ortiz says that Nino shoved a phone in his face, knowing, of course, that the new arrivals had no one to call. Then, according to Ortiz, Nino said, "Well, O.K., we'll pay for you." The workers saw Nino write out a check to El Chaparro. They were told that the bosses had paid a thousand dollars for each of them.

Nino has the same short, solid build as his brother but comes across as less threatening. His belly protrudes over his belt, and his hair, regardless of grooming, consistently looks windblown. (One of his acquaintances told me, "Nino always looks like he's just come from a party.") Nino didn't make anyone sign a contract. Instead, he simply warned his new recruits, "You'll have to pay us back. And the work is very hard." Nino then added a final detail, according to Ortiz: "He told us that if anyone took off before paying he'd beat the fuck out of us. He didn't say it like he was joking." At that point, seeking another job wasn't an option. As Ortiz explained, "I couldn't have gone elsewhere. I owed the money to them. If I refused, what was I going to do?"

El Diablo took the new arrivals to their lodgings, a former bar known as La Piñita, which had been converted into a filthy, crowded, dormitory-style barracks where workers slept six to a room on stained bare mattresses on the floor. While the men were being shown to their places, Hernandez, a soccer fan, noticed a small television set in one room. When he asked if he could perhaps arrange to have a set for his room as well, he recalled, El Diablo said angrily, "If you keep up with this kind of attitude, I'll pump you full of lead."

Ortiz, Hernandez, and Sanchez spent the next month working for the Ramoses, eight to twelve hours a day, six or seven days a week. Every Friday after work, Nino or El Diablo would pull up to the groves or in front of La Guadalupana (which was owned by Alicia Barajas) in a Ford F-250 pickup truck, holding a large sack full of money. After charging workers a check-cashing fee, the brothers then garnisheed for rent, food, work equipment, the ride from Arizona, and daily transportation to and from the fields. Whatever remained was usually spent on food at La Guadalupana. The three friends and their fellow-laborers barely broke even.

They were also under constant surveillance. La Piñita was only a few yards away from Highway 27, which runs through the citrus belt west of Lake Okeechobee. One day, when Hernandez and another worker tried to telephone their wives from a nearby Kash n' Karry convenience store, El Diablo pulled up behind them, asked whom they were calling, and pointedly offered them a ride home. When the Ramos brothers weren't around, workers were watched by relatives and supervisors carrying cell phones who lived in the barracks and patrolled the surrounding area. Ortiz recalled being told by one supervisor, "If you want to leave, go ahead. But I'll call the bosses, and they'll feed you to the alligators." The supervisor pointed to a lake behind La Piñita and said, "They haven't eaten for awhile." For the newcomers, life in the United States wasn't quite what they had ex-

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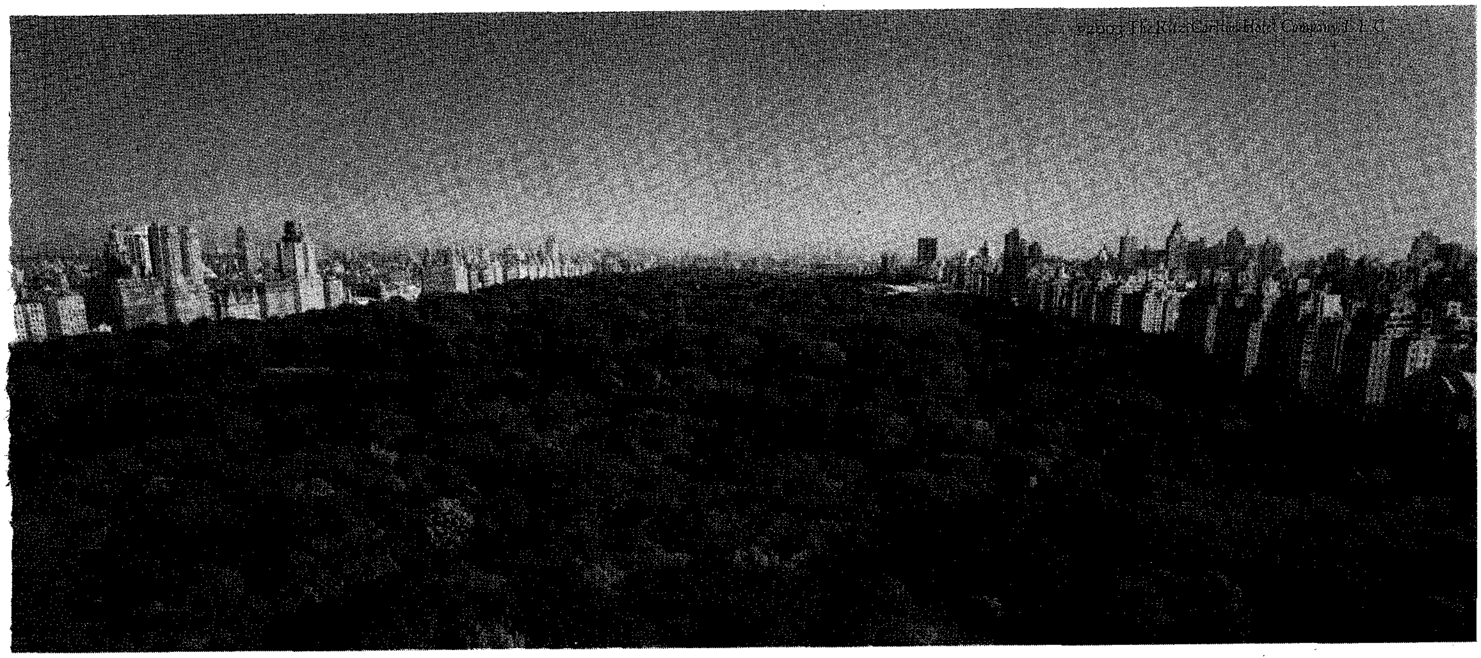

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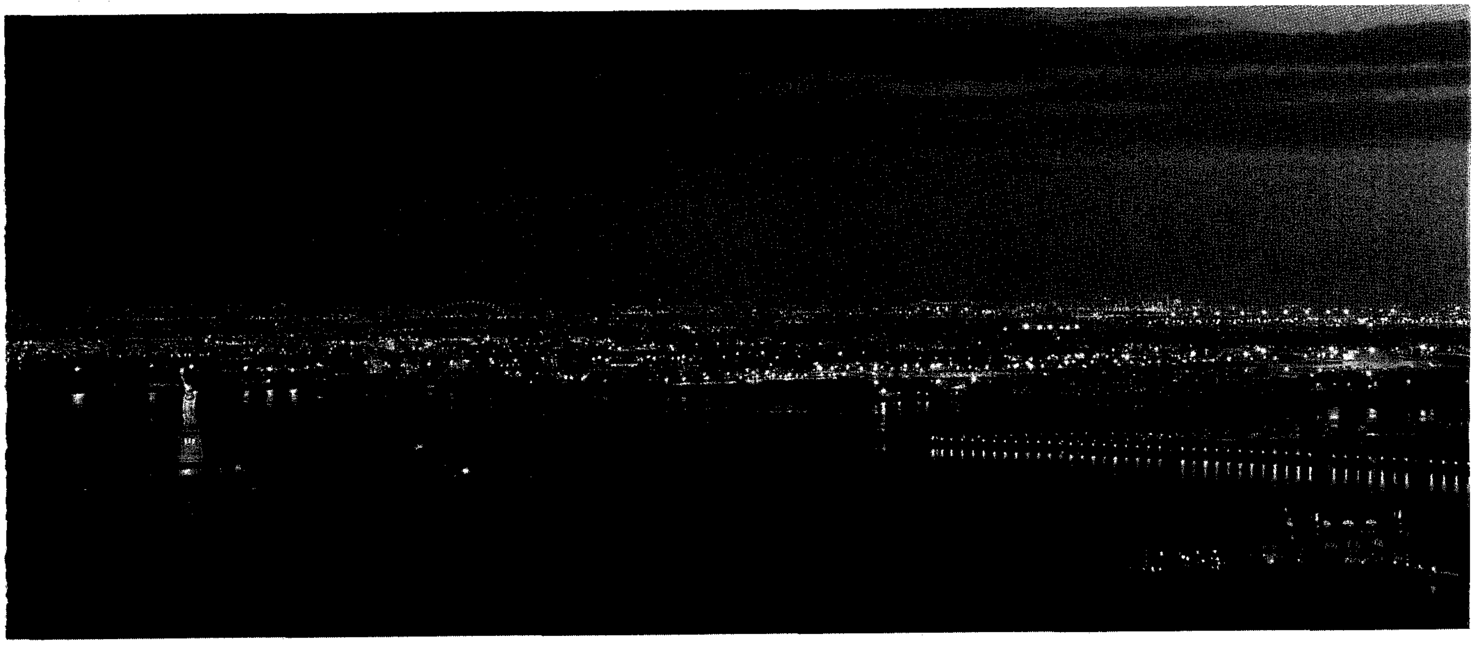

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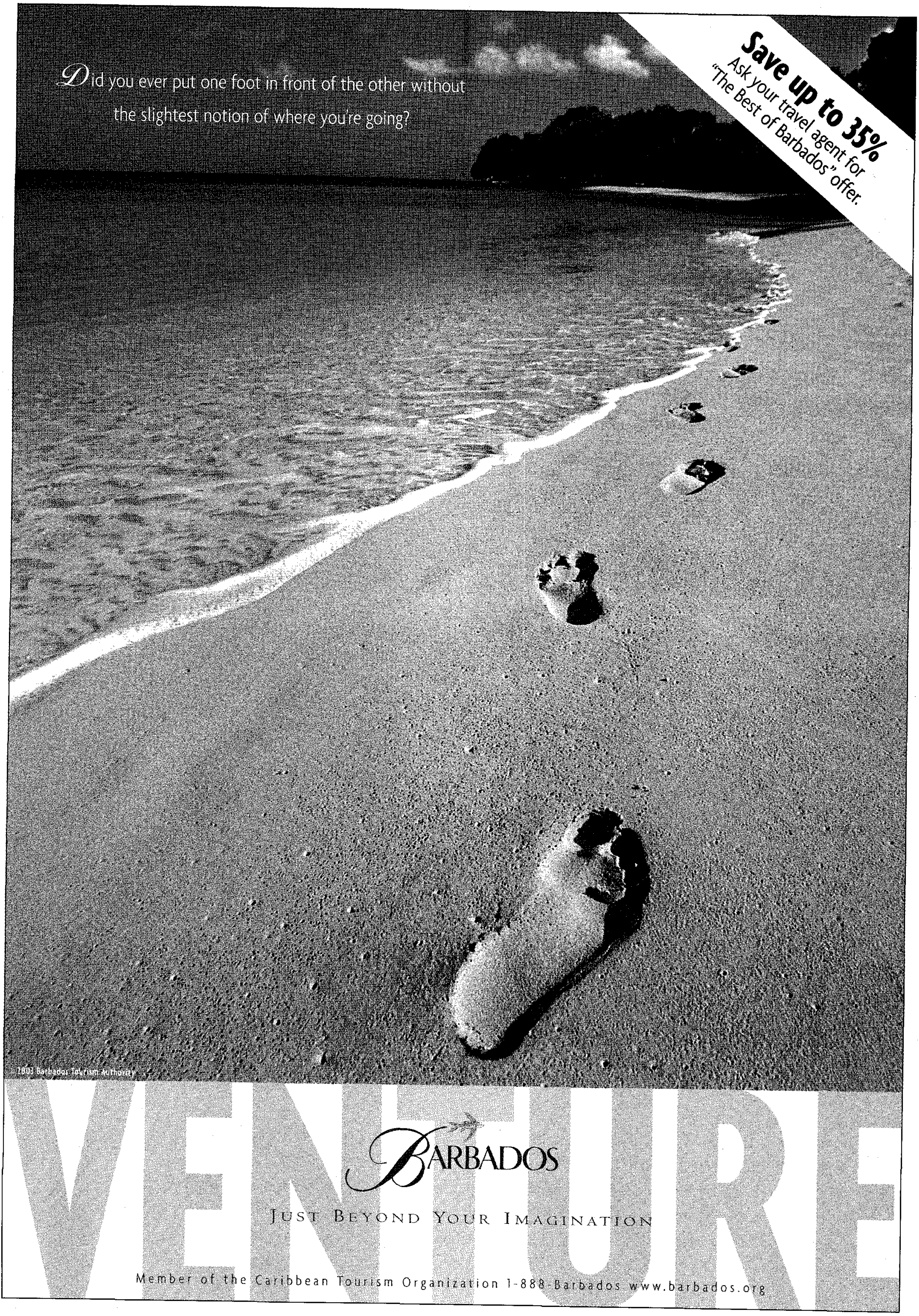

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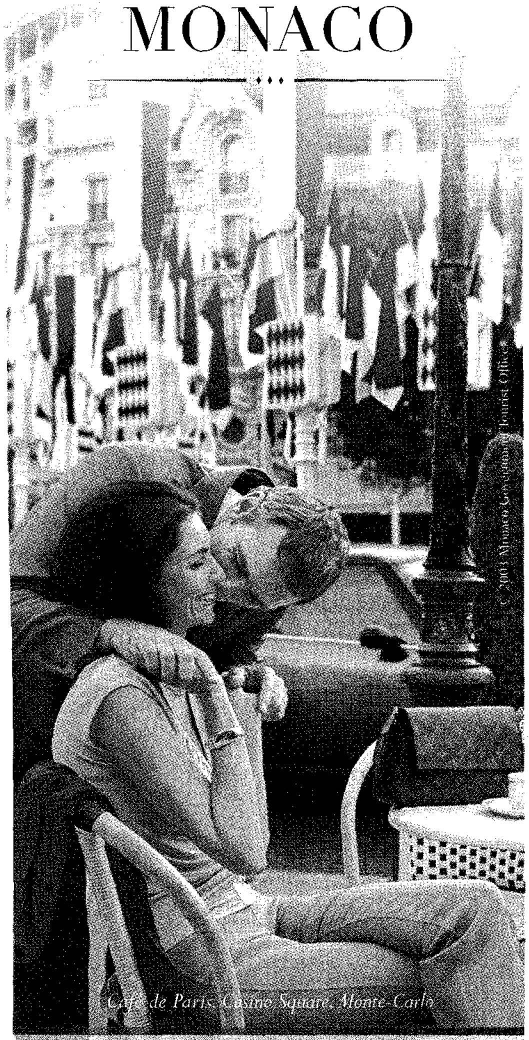
Living it Up

What does your crystal ball tell you about the future of first-class travel? That was the question we put to several consultants, executives, and journalists on the travel industry's luxury circuit. Their answers, novel and otherwise, reflect the increasingly high expectations of blue-ribbon travellers—an insistence on being catered to with personalized service, wanting their needs anticipated, and being afforded choices. Not surprisingly, their overriding concern was safety and security.

But perhaps the most telling marker to emerge was the enthusiasm with which elite travellers have embraced a kind of carriage-trade cheap chic. That makes the larger question, according to our sources, how much (or how little) the luxury-minded will be willing to pay for first-class travel in the future.

Not the asking price. According to Peter Yesawich, a researcher and consultant who heads Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell, an Orlando-based marketing firm that specializes in the travel industry, an entirely new megatrend has materialized. "The world has changed forever, even among the affluent, in terms of planning and buying travel," he says. "There's a clearly altered buying pattern driven by the concept of value. They still want to ride up front and stay at the Ritz, but they just don't want to pay for it anymore." Eric Long, general manager of The Waldorf=Astoria (www.waldorfastoria.com) concurs. "It all comes down to perceived value," he says.

Matthew Upchurch, chief executive officer of Virtuoso (www.virtuoso.com), a six-thousand-member network of luxury-travel consultants, believes upscale group tours will be characterized by what he calls "collective bargaining for the affluent." In other words, such tours will be loosely organized affairs composed of sophisticated travellers who are attracted principally by the money-saving aspects of group travel.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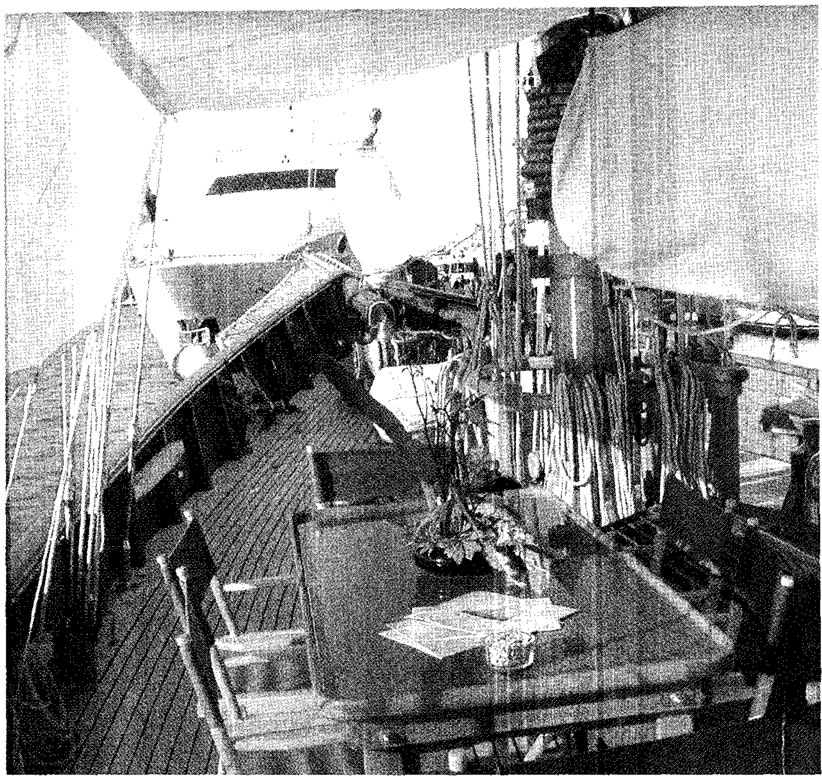

COURTESY OF THE HORCHOW TRAVEL COLLECTION

Fueling the skinflint rebellion is the sea change brought about by the confluence of reduced personal wealth and the powerful negotiating tool of the Internet. Yesawich maintains that the incidence of Internet usage among the affluent is much higher than among the general population. Many of these individuals are "using the technology to get what they consider rightfully theirs: A good deal," he says. But that doesn't mean they are willing to forgo luxury. According to Yesawich, "In what is broadly acknowledged as a buyer's market, the whole idea is to get a room at the Four Seasons Hualalai for $289 a night."

"Luxury travellers all want a deal," agrees NBC's Peter Greenberg, travel editor of "The Today Show," and "they'll get it precisely because they know how to negotiate." As Chris Barnett, a Copley News Service syndicated columnist puts it, "Affluent travellers are much savvier than they've ever been, and they're going to expect five-star quality at three-star prices."

great expectations

Blue-ribbon travellers not only expect the best, but they also expect mind-reading from the travel industry. Virtuoso's Upchurch says, "Give me ten affluent people who want to go to Paris, and I'll find twenty different opinions about what they want to do." Wolf Hengst, the president of worldwide operations for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts (www.fourseasons.com), ticks off some of the standard expectations of guests: "Don't let me stand in line. Recognize me. Give me my level of privacy. Take care of whatever I want efficiently and quickly."

future forward at the ritz

If New York's two new Ritz-Carlton hotels are any indication, the future of award-winning hotels will be more cosseting than ever. **The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park**, opened in January 2002, affords sweeping harbor views of the Statue of Liberty from more than half of its rooms, and even provides telescopes for keener scrutiny. There are "bath butlers" on call, and a "water sommelier" to consult with in the dining room. Even newer, **The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park** opened last April after a four-year reconstruction of the St. Moritz on Central Park South. It too affords spyglasses for those in park-view rooms, and butlers stand by to draw baths for patrons. But the strongest sense of the future is the hotel's pre-call service, which contacts first-time guests prior to arrival to solicit their preferences. (800-241-3333; www.ritzcarlton.com)

An oversupply of luxury hotel rooms, spurred by the affluence boom of the late nineteen-nineties, has heightened the competition for upscale customers, according to The Waldorf=Astoria's Long. "New services and amenities become expected," he says. "You had better 'wow' your guest or someone else will."

Conventional wisdom holds that the savvy been-there-done-that baby boomers, flush and free from obligations, will be the standard bearers for soaring expectations in travel. However, Hengst believes that Gen Xers have even loftier tastes. "An entire generation has grown up as extremely sophisticated travellers with far higher standards than previous generations," he advises, and notes that the average age of Four Seasons' customers has declined from forty-two to thirty-nine.

PRIVATE BAR

VICTORIAN PUB IN LONDON © MARK MAC LAREN

can't get too personal

When it comes to air travel, however, current expectations are not particularly high. "With exceedingly few exceptions, airline service today has become a commodity business," comments NBC's Greenberg. Upchurch agrees. "At some point, everything aboard an airliner becomes a commodity, including full reclining seats." Rather than simply purchasing a product, "what the affluent traveller wants out of the airlines is to be treated a little special," says Yesawich. The airlines are regularly criticized, observes Greenberg, "for punishing the very people they so desperately need." He believes the airlines would regain much lost goodwill by personalizing the boarding process for their elite customers. Yesawich suggests that such customers might even be willing to pay more for the customization of such things as the reservations process, checking in, the assigning of seats, and baggage delivery.

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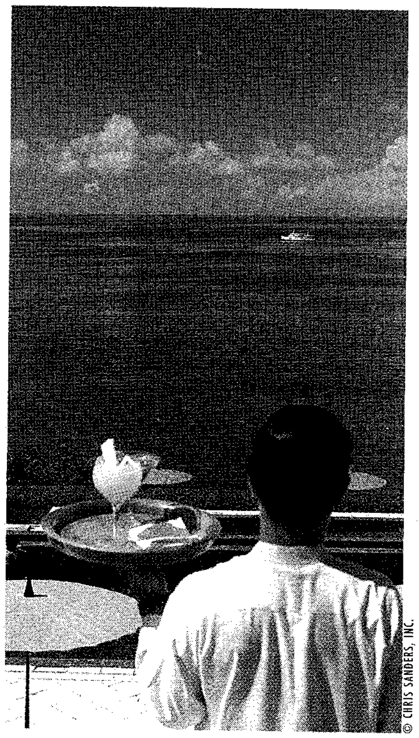

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Virtuoso's Upchurch believes that luxury travellers increasingly will demand travel experiences tailored to their individual requirements. "The mantra for affluent travellers is customization and personalization—give me choice and uniqueness, and do not make me a number."

Says Yesawich, "Travel experiences will be custom-crafted, such as checking in and out of hotels on a guest's own time and terms. Computerized histories will keep track of frequent-customer preferences on a worldwide basis. These are the kinds of things that will make a difference."

Upchurch suggests that perhaps the greatest failing of upscale travel has been a tendency to merely react to guests' wishes after they have been expressed. He believes an aggressively proactive stance will be required in the future. "We've been telling hotels that one more marble bathroom isn't going to make a difference," he says. "It's not about the gimmicks—the water purifying system, the intelligent pillow," echoes Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company (www.ritzcarlton.com) vice president John Cottrill. "What's most memorable is service—human contact."

"What's important is why the concierge isn't calling the customer prior to his or her stay, and why the customer can't get a massage in the million-dollar spa because they're booked up by the time of arrival," says Upchurch. He lauds Silversea Cruises (www.silversea.com) for introducing personalized cruising. Their new program, launched in January, covers the firm's three ships and permits passengers to book voyages of varying lengths (minimum five days) instead of complying with traditional set itineraries. Still, he wonders why "you can't pre-book a massage before you board." However, Hengst observes that such perks may prove to be impractical. Although he acknowledges that contacting guests prior to arrival is a good idea in principle, he cautions that large hoteliers "may have thousands of guests arriving, so calling everyone is not realistic."

"The ability to make guests feel special—to serve them as individuals and not faces in the crowd—is what creates the feeling of exclusivity and luxury," says Richard Meadows, senior vice-president of Seabourn Cruise Line (www.seabourn.com). "Upscale travellers are continually looking for unique experiences that will impact

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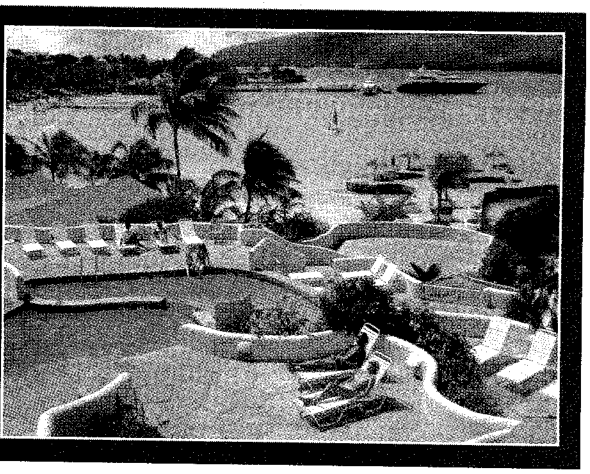


and enrich their lives. That's why they travel."

What it boils down to for the future of the luxury cruise market is choice. "People want to have choices in their daily lives," observes CEO Gregg Michel of Crystal Cruises, "and they want to have choices when they travel on a cruise ship." The cruise line intends to address guests' needs by providing them with more choices and more activities.

high-tech solutions

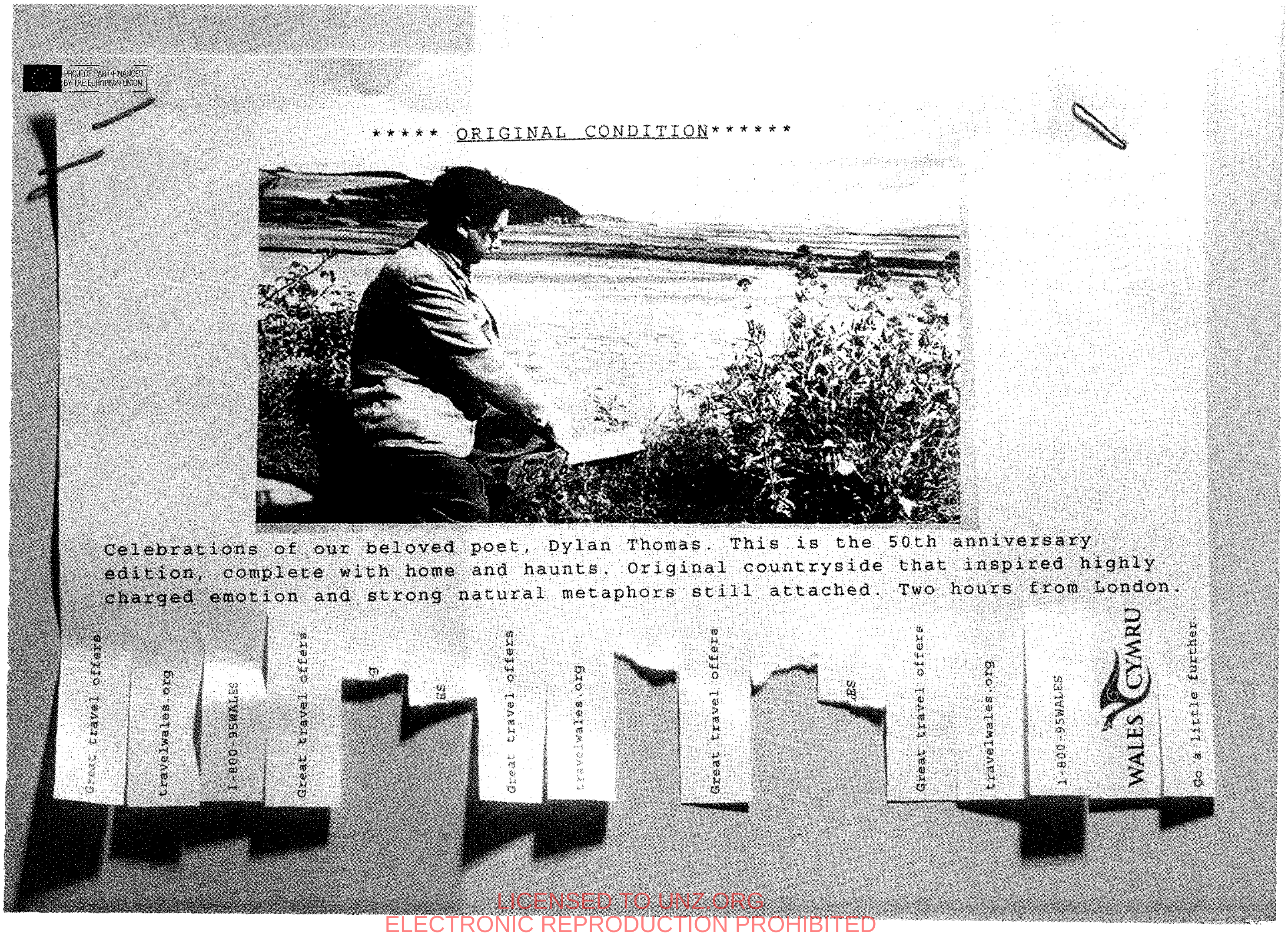
Technology can be an effective tool for making proactive service a reality, says Yesawich. "The Internet is the solution."

Whereas upscale hotels have long kept track of frequent guests' preferences in order to predict their needs, the trend now, according to Hengst, is to do so on a worldwide basis. For example, the Four Seasons has a guest identification program in the works that will expand computerization of guests' preferences to all fifty-eight of Four Seasons' hotels.

RARY FIRST CLASS TRAVEL

ANASSA IN CYPRUS COURTESY OF VIRTUOSO

Cottrill reports that The Ritz-Carlton is focusing on how to use technology to better accommodate patrons. Its new Orlando hotel, scheduled to open in July, will contact all guests prior to arrival to help them book the area's attractions in advance. The company is also developing a "smart card" to forward to guests before they arrive. Not only will it embed guests'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HOTEL DE PARIS IN MONACO © MARK MAC LAREN

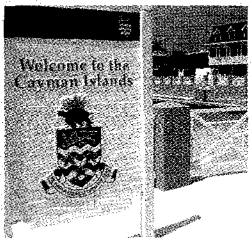
preferences and permit them to bypass traditional hotel registration procedures, it will use satellite positioning technology to alert the hotel to what stage a guest is in during the arrival process. "Eighty per cent of the guests we surveyed are in favor of the concept," says Cottrill. "But we will have to convince them that we will be good stewards of their information."

"One of my pet peeves is the thinking that technology will dehumanize the travel industry," complains Robert Mandelbaum of PKF Consulting, a major hotel consulting firm. Used correctly, he maintains, technology can only improve the travel experience. "The option of swiping a card and going right to your room will exist soon," he says, and it will have a special appeal for guests who prefer to keep interaction with staff members to a minimum.

safe and secure

Ask traditional luxury hoteliers what their guests believe is the most important thing a hotel can do for them, and invariably they respond that it's to provide top service. Yesawich, citing his company's survey of five-hundred affluent travellers, counters that although five-star service is still highly valued, "By far the most important thing happens to be safety and security." His definition of security expands well beyond the traditional concern with freedom from physical harm. "It's more of a feeling of well-being," he maintains. Four Season's Hengst agrees. "Our customers tell us that a sense of comfort and security—being taken care of as if they were at home—is extremely important."

navigating luxury



This year marks the quincentennial anniversary of Genoese explorer Christopher Columbus's sighting of uninhabited limestone islands peeking from the sea—now known as **The Cayman Islands** (www.caymanislands.ky). Though the entire year will commemorate this British Oversea Territory's half-millennium, May is designated as the official "Discovery Month." Highlights will include the unveiling of a "Wall of History," the dedication of a quincentennial monument in the capital of Georgetown, and a royal visit by the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

Located approximately 480 miles south of Miami, this triumvirate of islands—Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, and Cayman Brac—is widely known as an easy-going, English-speaking destination enjoying convenient proximity to the U.S., frequent direct air service, fine beaches, and top diving and snorkeling. It is also known for being exceptionally family-friendly. However, not many know that Grand Cayman is reputed to be the world's fifth largest financial center (only London, Tokyo, New York, and Hong Kong are larger) or that it's the most prosperous island nation in the Caribbean.

"The Cayman Islands are an easy choice for affluent travellers," says the deputy director of tourism Pilar Bush, "because they can have all the comforts of home while vacationing with us." A variety of first-class accommodations is available. But the exclamation point, she says, "is the $350 million Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman Resort, which will join other luxury hotels on the island's famed Seven Mile Beach next year."

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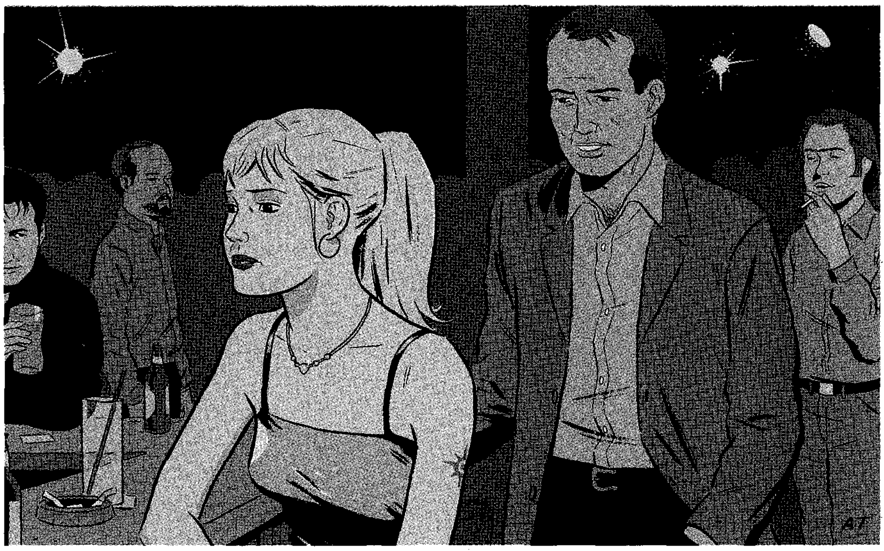
This is an uncommon experience. Cast your mind back over the movies of the past year and try to name the last occasion on which you honestly cared, one way or another, what happened to the figures onscreen. Such empathy is hardly the sole purpose of filmgoing, but it clearly fuels the ardent, unpious Moodysson as he tracks the destiny of Lilya. We see her accompanying her friend Natasha (Elina Benenson) on a trip to a night club, and reacting with revulsion as Natasha (who, like Lilya, is still at school) turns a brief trick for cash. Next thing we know, Lilya is doing the same, and the saddest sight in the picture is the sly smile that creases her face—a smug teen-age triumph, faintly haloed in guilt—as she marches around the supermarket with her ill-earned cash.



Oksana Akinshina in a new movie by the director of "Together."

ADRIAN TOMINE

Being Lilya, she does a good thing with bad money. She buys a basketball for Volodya (Artiom Bogucharski), a Dickensian scrap of a boy who starts as a pain in the neck and grows into Lilya's only friend in the world. (The errant Natasha has long since dropped from view.) Volodya is thrown out of his home; he sleeps curled up in stairwells, like a dog, or next to Lilya in her stained apartment. Together, they visit the windy shell of an old Soviet submarine base nearby; Moodysson doesn't press the point, but, if you want to see how the larger current of history sweeps past the unregarded citizens who were supposed to be its beneficiaries, look at this pair of kids, sniffing glue in a concrete room, glancing at a red mural of Lenin, and leafing through damp sheaves of Party proclamations. Workers of the world, forget it.

Not that the dispensation of recent times has dealt kindly with Lilya or Volodya. At the most, it has sweetened the candy of their daydreams. You feel weirdly crushed as the boy bounces his ball and murmurs of Michael Jordan, or as the girl announces that she shares a birthday with Britney Spears. For a while, it seems that Lilya, in tune with those romantic fancies, has found her man—a polite, well-dressed fellow named Andrei (Pavel Ponomaryov), who offers her a ride one chilly night and doesn't even try to sleep with her. ("So you think I'm ugly?" she protests, a line that shows how fast she has slid toward perdition.) He takes her to a funfair, and then to McDonald's, and he talks about an even more succulent Eden—a job, a salary, a place to live—that awaits them in the West. Lilya's excitement is tremulous and genuine, and we should be pleased for her; but all we want to do is stand up and shout, "Don't do it. Stay with Volodya. *Don't go.*"

But she does go, and what she discovers there, in a rain-gray suburb in Sweden, is incomparably worse than all that she left behind. I will not drag you through the murk; suffice to say that, the second time I saw "Lilya 4-Ever," it was with an invited audience from UNICEF and Amnesty International. I know why they were there, and the social problem with which the movie deals is a dire and contagious one that Moodysson himself is keen, and right, to publicize. On the other hand, it would be counterproductive to tag this film as the spearhead of a campaign. Nothing turns a movie audience off more speedily than the suspicion that it is buying tickets for a lecture. You should pay to see "Lilya 4-Ever" not because it will introduce you to the crime of human trafficking in the rubble of the Soviet empire but because, at its simplest and most scalding, it is an essay on love.

That may sound perverse, given the vacuum of affection into which Lilya is plunged. But Moodysson is not in the business of squalor, still less of melodrama; rather, he carefully leads us through the process by which love is drained from the world. That is why Andrei's approaches are designed to make a mockery of ordinary flirtation, and why the final outrage that is visited upon Lilya should be such an appalling cartoon of parenthood. A neat, wealthy Swede takes her into his spacious house, sits her down and tells her to do her homework, as if she were his own daughter, and then violates that parody of trust. From here, the movie crashes breathlessly to its close.

So why sit through it? Because *we* love Lilya, even if nobody else, apart from Volodya, gives a damn. She is far from a saint; but, from the moment when she buys potato chips, fruit juice, and cigarettes, only to hand back the juice because she can't afford it, we feel the urge—pointless but overwhelming—to be at her side. "All her shame had obviously touched her only mechanically; no trace of real corruption had yet crept into her heart; he could see that; it was her real self that stood before him . . ." That is Sonya, the prostitute in "Crime and Punishment," and Lukas Moodysson, like Dostoevsky before him, and like Robert Bresson in his great film "Mouchette," finds a core of goodness in one young woman that embarrasses and damns the predatory spirits who hover around and peck at her. I want to see "Lilya 4-Ever" one more time, but I'm not sure that I can take it. *Mein Herz brennt.* ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

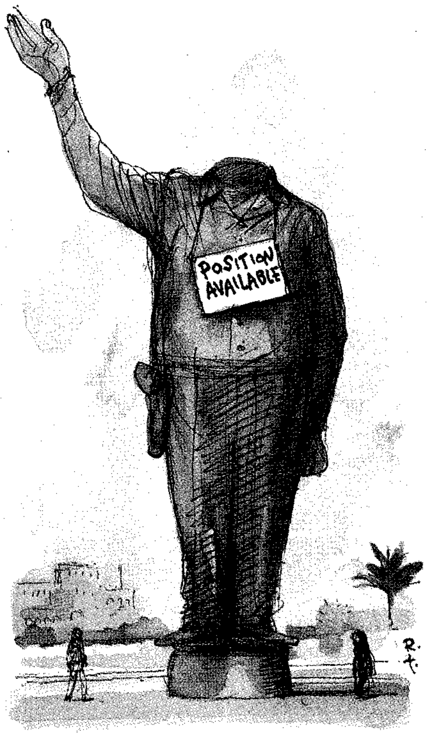
AFTER SADDAM: A BRIEFER

Ali al-Qastani. Chairman, Iraqi Expatriate Congress. Close to the Pentagon but distrusted by the State Department and the C.I.A. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz's favorite "good Iraqi," though privately viewed by others in the Pentagon as a merely O.K. Iraqi. In a speech to the Council of Terrific Iraqis, al-Qastani called for "a democratic, pluralistic Iraq," administered by himself and members of his immediate family. Did not endear himself to Jordan's King Abdullah when he challenged him to arm-wrestle during a recent Pan-Arab conference.

Ismail bin Aziz. Director, Coalition of Very Good Iraqis. Soft-spoken, moderate, a favorite of Colin Powell, but viewed suspiciously by Pentagon "neo-conservatives"—the Zionist cabal directing U.S. foreign policy on behalf of Ariel Sharon—for admitting to the *Financial Times* that he still has to look up "Sunni" and "Shiite" in his copy of "Jane's Inter-Denominational Hatreds." But, with his contacts, he might be given a second-tier government department to run, such as the Ministry of Dromedary Emissions.

Mansour al-Shazz. Director, Association of Excellent Iraqis. Favored by C.I.A. director George Tenet, who in 1997 had an electronic bug and tracking device secretly implanted in al-Shazz's lower GI during a routine colonoscopy at the Mayo Clinic. Attracted considerable following among expatriate Iraqis after promising each of them ten per cent of the country's oil revenues once he is installed as leader.

Muhammad bin Bashir. Executive Director, Coalition of Perfectly Fine Iraqis. Favored by Defense Policy Board member Richard Perle, whom he met in 1993 at a French cooking school in Provence. Popular among gastronomically sophisticated Iraqi exiles, but could face U.S. congressional opposition for his support of Strom Thurmond for President in 1948.



RICHARD THOMPSON

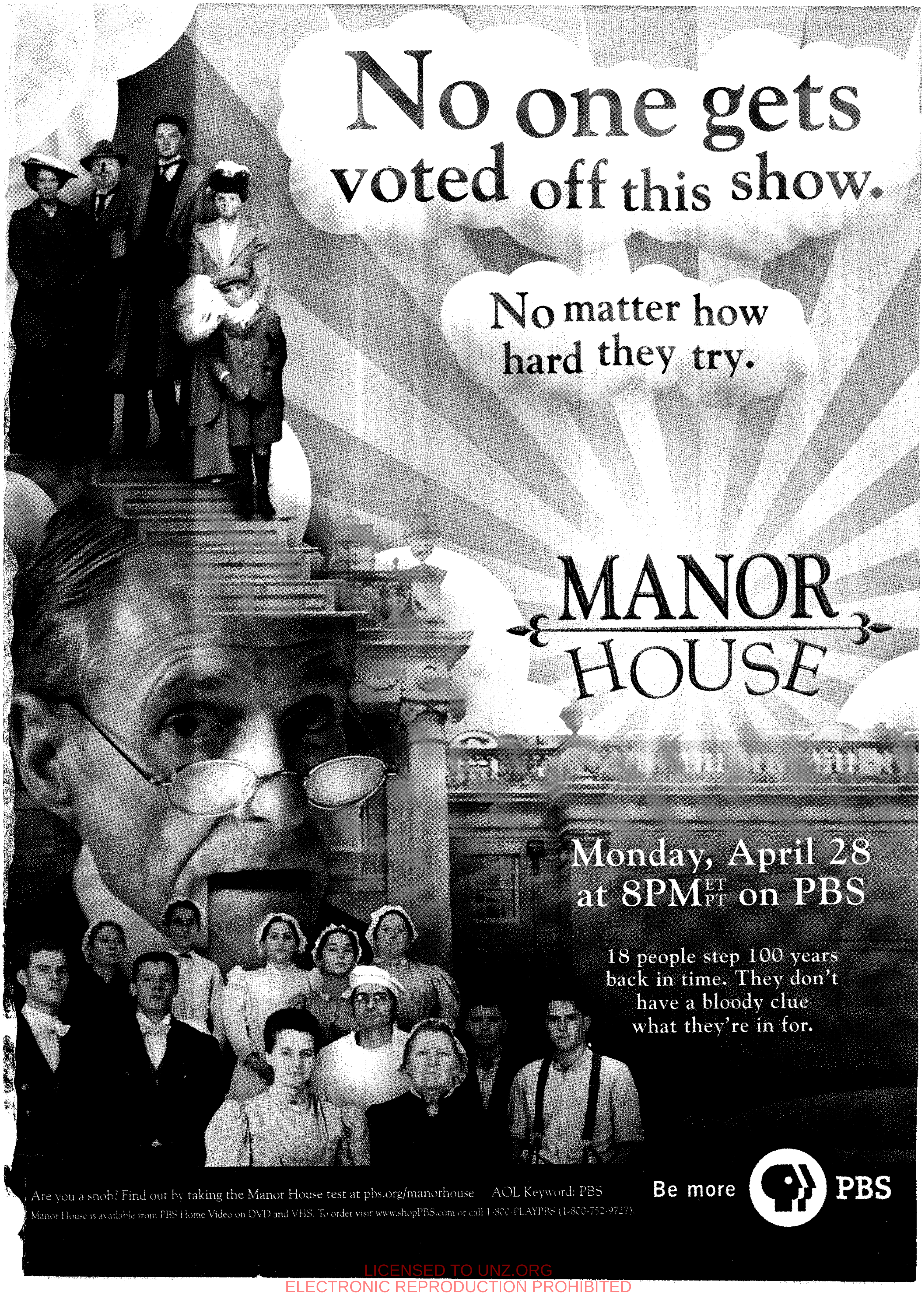
Anwar Karam. President, Friends of Anwar Karam. Favored by Exxon Mobil for his "Whatever" attitude to U.S. investment in post-Saddam Iraq. Gave a widely noticed speech at the Council on Foreign Relations denouncing French President Jacques Chirac and Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin as "despicable amphibians who have seen their last drop of Iraqi oil."

Omar bad Karmah. President, Coalition of Recovering Bad Iraqis. Favored by no one, really, but has made himself useful by acting as liaison to the very worst elements of the former regime, who, though truly awful, may be needed to perform some of the unpleasant work of nation rebuilding, such as W.M.D. (Weapons of Mass Destruction) disposal and replacing the heads on the statues of Saddam Hussein with likenesses of the new leader.

Said Hassan. Executive Director, League of Rapidly Improving Iraqis. Charismatic. Nicknamed "Scooter" for his habit of driving a Vespa from table to table at Pan-Arab conferences. Well liked by Powell and Tenet, but may have damaged his chances of being taken seriously again by referring to Geraldo Rivera during an on-camera interview as "a latter-day Alexander the Great."

Salim al-Wolfowitz. Chairman, Association of Iraqis Who Have Changed Their Last Names, formerly the Association of Could Be Much Worse Iraqis. Widely viewed as opportunistic and self-promoting but seen as "inflexible" for waiting too long to change previous name, Salim al-Gore.

Omar Sharif. Honorary Chairman, Association of Still Dashing Egyptian Actors Who Look Iraqi Enough to Play the Part. Commands strong following pretty much everywhere, though Wolfowitz, stung by recent celebrity protests against the war, is said to harbor reservations about putting an actor, no matter how Middle Eastern-looking, in charge of the new Iraq. Rumored to be top candidate of Laura, Barbara, and Lauren Bush. ♦



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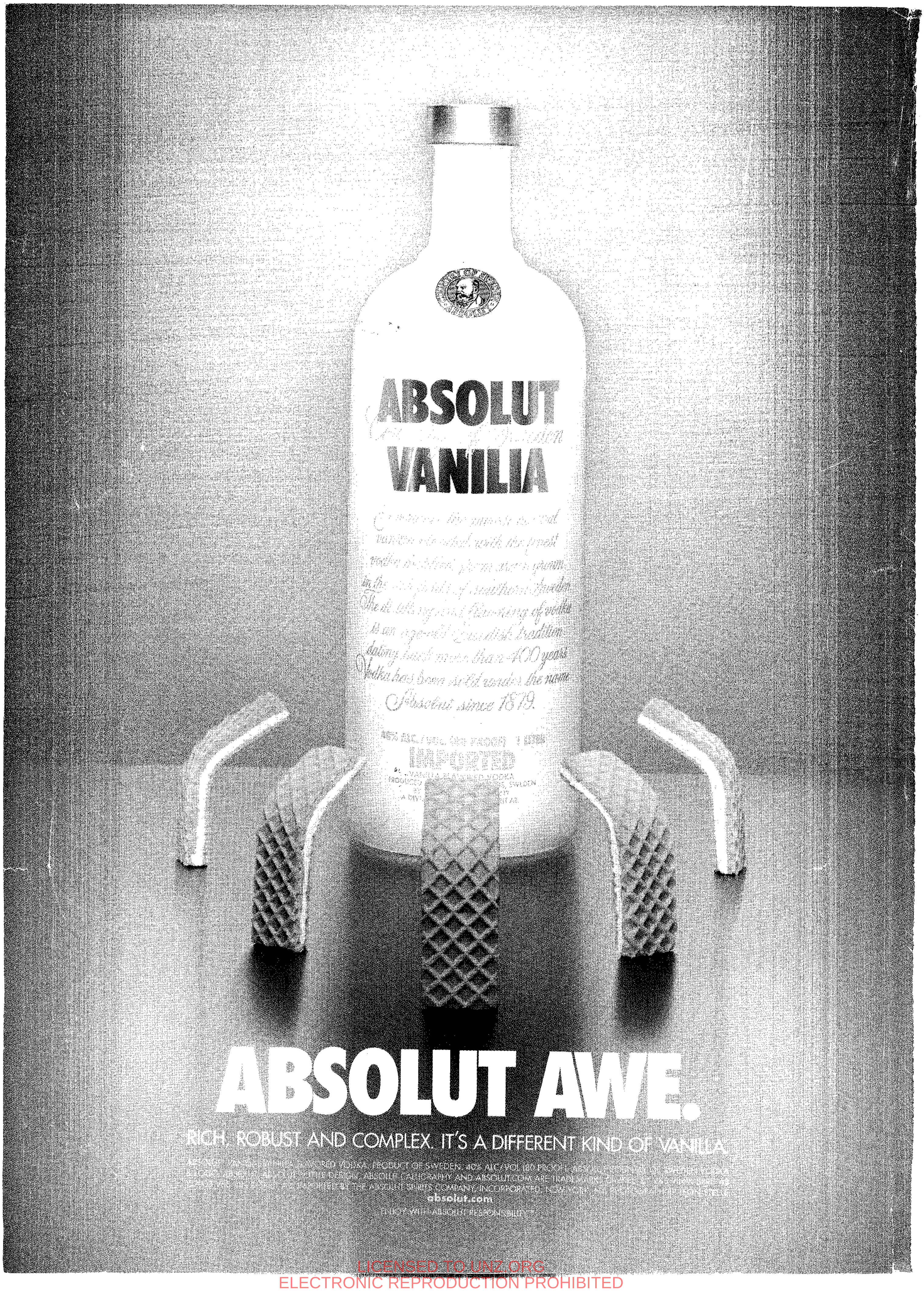
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